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# Chapter Guide

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# Prologue

If she had known death would be this judgemental to her, Morning Glory wished she hadn't been so careless to neglect her health instead.

She still felt cold even as her mate pressed against her, his head atop hers with a touch gentler than a butterfly.

The guardians of both the Land Of Darkness and the Tribe Of Shining Suns, Life and Death, had judged her severely for her crimes of turning on her daughter. In the end, she was lucky that Life had allowed her into the Tribe Of Shining Suns.

She had been under the influence of a cruel cat who tore apart relationships for her to get all the power that she desired, yet Death had sneered that no mother would believe another cat over her own *child*.

She and Cedar Strike had died when the tribe went through a period of time where prey was scarce, and not wanted to bother the other three tribes, they hadn't asked for help.

A good queen and king would give their prey to the weaker cats to enable a better chance of survival, she had reasoned, and thus neglected her health as she fed the kits and elders of the Tribe Of The Blooming Valley, while she slowly starved herself and caught sickness.

Now as she sat by the starry pool watching her beloved children lead the tribe she loved so dear with her mate, brother and deceased kit by her side, her eyes glimmered with forming tears of pride and sadness.

"*Go forth, my precious hatchlings*," she whispered softly. "*I will see you all one day. My brave hatchlings, I love you*."

# Prophecy

*"When the Season of Bitter Cold is gone,*
*The graceful bird listens for the melodious songs.*
*Kin from a star lost to the cold,*
*The avian of grace must become bold.*
*She will fly over the mountain peaks,*
*Avoiding the sharp-taloned eagles and their beaks.*
*Her, along with her community,*
*Must stay together to find their home for all eternity."*

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*"As the avian follows the voices down the peaks*
*She will find half the answers that she seeks.*
*Elements opposing one another bound by love,*
*Come by the oath of the ones above.*
*The group of flames must traverse across the sea*
*To find the kingdom shrouded in mist for all eternity."*

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*A beautiful avian of grace will soar above the peaks, following the songs of glory to complete what the lost star did not.*

# Allegiances

BlazeClan

Leader
Azurestar- A sleek silver tom with darker grey stripes and a white underbelly and yellow eyes.
Current Mate: Aldertrail
Kit: (foster) Goslingpaw
_____

Royal Heirs
Lichenfrost- A gold-brown she-cat with curled ears, green eyes and a white chest heart, no longer able to take on the throne.
_____

Deputy
Beechwhisker- Cream mackerel tabby tom with nicked ears and blue eyes.
Titanpaw: Slatepaw
_____

Claws
Thornslash- Russet tom with a white belly, chest and tail, tufted ears and green eyes.

Crowcall- A black spotted tabby tom with short fur and amber eyes.

Nightscar- A black furred tom with ebony stripes and yellow eyes.
Titanpaw: Depthpaw

Stormslash- Brown ticked "pseudo tabby" tom with copper eyes and white ears.
Titanpaw: Stonepaw

Firstone- Red spotted "pseudo tabby" tom with hazel eyes and white paws.

Gustfang- Slightly smaller sized grey tabby with darker stripes, green eyes and a white chest and underbelly.

Tigersnap- Apricot mackerel "pseudo-tabby" tom with dark green eyes.

Thrushpounce- A dark grey tabby with black and paler grey striped splotches and a white blaze on his forehead, green-blue eyes, tufted ears and protruding fangs.
Titanpaw: Cootpaw

Weaseltail- A rust-coloured Abyssinian tomcat with nicked ears, pale dusky amber eyes and a black tail tip.

Hornetsting- Brown furred tomcat with medium white spotting, short ears and green eyes.

Cragshade- A red ticked "pseudo tabby" tom with short fur and copper eyes.
Titanpaw: Lionpaw

Stoatsnarl- Cream and brown tom with tufted ears, a long tail and amber eyes.

Pinethorn- A white and dark grey tom with a massive nick in his left ear and brilliant blue eyes

Stagpounce- Black mackerel tabby tom with short fur and yellow eyes.

Bearclaw- Red classic "pseudo-tabby" tom with short fur and gold eyes.

Talonsnarl- Blue classic tabby tom with long fur and hazel eyes.

Foxfang- Sparse haired red and black mackerel calico tom with green eyes

Sootear- Caramel tom with short fur and green-gold eyes.
Titanpaw: Rockpaw

Snakebelly- White furred tom with cream and blue spotted calico-tabby tail and ears and yellow eyes.

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Shines

Sunshimmer- Blue and cream classic tortoiseshell-tabby she-cat with blue and green eyes.
Claw: Firstone
Starpaw: Streampaw

Floralstreak- Short-furred lilac and cream spotted tortoiseshell-tabby she-cat with blue eyes.
Claw: Nightscar
Starpaw: Swanpaw

Petalwhisper- Red mackerel "pseudo tabby" she-cat with short fur and blue eyes.
Claw: Thornslash
Kits: Depthpaw

Featherbreeze- Cream spotted "pseudo-tabby" she-cat with pale yellow eyes and curled ears.
Claw: Stoatsnarl

Starlingspirit- Blue spotted tabby she-cat with sparse fur and amber eyes.
Claw: Gustfang
Kits: Rockpaw, Slatepaw, Stonepaw

Vervainwhisker- Fawn she-cat with a white chest, belly and paws, tufted ears and gold eyes.
Claw: Weaseltail

Chanterellestreak- Blue and cream mackerel calico she-cat with short fur and blue eyes.
Starpaw: Softpaw

Sagethroat- Short-furred white she-cat with black and red spotted calico-tabby tail and ears and green eyes.
Starpaw: Hazelpaw
Claw: Cragshade

Lilynose- Caramel and apricot mackerel calico she-cat with short fur and amber eyes.
Starpaw: Cinderpaw
Claw: Thrushpounce

Lilacheart- Blue and cream tortoiseshell she-cat with white paws and pale green eyes.

Minkstripe- Cinnamon and red classic calico she-cat with curled ears and green eyes.
Starpaw: Honeypaw

Fawnspeckle- Fawn spotted tabby she-cat with long fur and amber eyes.

Rosewater- Long haired lilac and cream mackerel and tortoiseshell she-cat with green eyes.
Claw: Stagpounce

Tansytail- Cinnamon and red mackerel tortoiseshell she-cat with pale green eyes.
Claw: Snakebelly

Dovetail- A white and cream she-cat with amber eyes and a long tail.
Kits: Goslingkit and Swankit
Claw: A brown and white mackerel tabby tom with amber eyes who was renamed Blazeclaw, his real name is unknown. (Deceased)

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Nettles
Stempetal- Ginger and white tabby with green eyes and tufted ears.

Elmriver- A black and red spotted tortoiseshell-tabby she-cat with amber eyes.

Berrytrail- Short furred black she-cat with small ears and yellow eyes.

Vinespring- Pale brown tabby with darker brown stripes, ebony paws and green-blue eyes.

Aldertrail- Deep brown she-cat with wavy fur, white streaks and green eyes.

Dawnheart- White she-cat with ginger and cream splotches and copper eyes

Willowflutter- Long furred blue mackerel tabby she-cat with green-yellow eyes.

Lotusheart- White and cream she-cat with curled ears, a short tail and gold eyes.

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Titanpaws
Depthpaw- Russet tomcat with a white underbelly, curled ears and copper eyes. Son of Thornslash and the most respected out of the Titanpaws.

Lionpaw- Golden mackerel tabby tom with green eyes and a sturdy build.

Slatepaw- Grey tom with darker stripes and blue eyes. The second oldest of his litter and is extremely close to his younger brother Stonepaw. His parents are Gustfang and Starlingspirit.

Stonepaw- A brown-grey tom with darker stripes, a short tail and gold-yellow eyes. The youngest of his litter and is very close to his older brother Slatepaw. His parents are Gustfang and Starlingspirit.

Cootpaw- A cream ticked tabby tomcat with white ears, paws and tail and green eyes.

Rockpaw- A blue-grey tom with darker stripes and green eyes. The oldest of his litter and a huge bully to his younger brothers Slatepaw and Stonepaw. His parents are Gustfang and Starlingspirit.

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Starpaws
Swanpaw- Pure white she-cat with amber eyes and a plumed tail, the 'prophecy cat'.

Honeypaw- Golden she-cat with darker swirls, blue eyes and a white underbelly and chest.

Streampaw- Silvery she-cat with dark grey stripes and green eyes.

Cinderpaw- Lilac and cream spotted tortoiseshell she-cat with copper eyes.

Hazelpaw- Cream and white mackerel she-cat with a short tail and

hazel eyes.

Softpaw- Mostly white, black and red mackerel tabby-calico she-cat with soft, short fur and gold eyes.

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Littlepaws
Goslingpaw- A cream and brown she-cat with amber eyes, white paws and strange white petal markings under her eyes.

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Queens
Cottonsong- A fully white she-cat with wavy fur, a long tail, green eyes and curled ears.
Kits:
Ripplekit (brown-ticked tabby with green eyes and curled ears)
Icekit (white tom with a long tail and copper eyes)
Hailkit (brown tom with wavy fur, copper eyes and white ears)
Mousekit (white splashed brown she-cat with green eyes, wavy fur and curled ears)
Claw: Stormslash

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Prickles
A grey she-cat with rosettes, blue eyes and a badly torn ear. (Cloudflower)

A brown striped tabby with green eyes and multiple scars on her pelt. (Chervilsky)

A white furred calico with unique orange eyes and a scar on her shoulder. (Poppystreak)

# Chapter 1: Friend Or Foe

The two winged cats gazed around at the gaping BlazeClan cats for a moment before chuckling, and Goslingpaw noticed that the silvery tom two pairs of wings quivered as he laughed.

"*I feel like more specific introductions are necessary, so I shall introduce us once more, a bit more clearly perhaps*," the red tom meowed with a loud, rumbly purr of amusement as his mate chuckled lightly.

"*I am Russet Rush of the Northern Valley Kingdoms and this is my mate Splash Sprint. I am from the Defence And Battle Guild while he is from the Hunting Guild*."

Gasps rang throughout the BlazeClan cats when they realised the legends were true all along; the Valley Cats were real and alive. "*Who is your leader?*" Questioned Russet Rush.

Azurestar stepped forward hesitantly. "*That would be me. I am Azurestar, leader of BlazeClan formerly hailing from the Pinewood Forests over the mountains*." He bowed down to the two Northern warriors. "*It is a pleasure to meet you*."

"*Ah, Pinewood Forests! That's where the logging engine went,*" sighed Splash Sprint. Beechwhisker stared at them incredulously. "*You know what's happening to the forest?*"

"*Yes, I'm afraid we do,*" replied Splash Sprint. "*But it is for a good cause.*"

"*Good cause?!*" Shouted Cragshade, Lionpaw's mentor. "*They drove us out of our home!*" Russet Rush merely flicked his ear before tilting his head to reply.

"*It is dry season here in the town where the humans live. Your forest home could easily light on fire in this type of scorching weather. Not to mention, there are many dead trees that are decaying in the forest as well.*"

He blinked. "*Wouldn't it be more dangerous if the humans hadn't done anything and the trees fall when it is least expected? What if the forest set on fire? The smoke would kill more cats.*"

"*Speaking of which*," the dual-winged tom interrupted. "*How many casualties have you had?*" Azurestar's shoulders sagged and he sighed heavily.

"*Four. Two lost in the forest, two in the mountains." "Ah,*" sighed Splash Sprint. The two winged toms bowed their heads and mewed, "*Ra'lia con'shir kia srilea'kou.*"

The puzzled looks given by the BlazeClan cats prompted faint chuckles from the two. "*What we said translates to 'May their spirits fly high' in the ancient language we used to speak called Shadish*," explained Russet Rush.

"*O-oh. Thank you for your kind words,*" breathed out Azurestar softly. Splash Sprint suddenly tilted his head to the left gently, and Goslingpaw jumped as his earthy eyes stared straight at her.

He whispered something briefly to his mate, and soon the other's stormy blue eyes turned to stare at her as well. The two murmured something for a minute, before Splash Sprint turned back to her and beckoned her to come forward.

Blinking nervously, she awkwardly stepped forward until she was in front of the two toms. "*Stars above,*" she thought. "*They look so tall compared to me.*"

The glossy silver-blue tom leaned down and gazed into her eyes before using his claws to gently pull her chin towards him and he studied her face for a moment.

"*It's her*," he finally mewed to his mate after releasing her. "*She's the one we were sent to find.*"

Goslingpaw stared nervously at the two toms. Splash Sprint gazed kindly at her before saying, "*Little one, you name is Goslingpaw, right? That's what his majesty told us.*"

"*Yes- wait, his.. majesty?*" Goslingpaw looked at the blue tom in

confusion, and her foster father behind her cocked his head with a puzzled expression on his face.

"*You mean he never told you?*" Russet Rush meowed in an incredulous tone, twitching his tail in surprise. "*Rippling Leaf was the king of our tribe before he disappeared.*"

"*WHAT?!*" There were many gasps of shock, but none louder and more shocked than Dovetail herself. "*You heard me,*" mewed Russet Rush calmly.

"*Our tribe functions in a way that only siblings with the royal bloodline will lead the tribe. If any of the siblings happen to have kits then their kits will lead the tribe when they pass on,*" he explained.

"*That means you are destined to take over the tribe when your cousins and our current rulers pass, though you may have to play a waiting game for quite a while*," Splash Sprint purred.

He gazed to Azurestar next, and queried, "*May I know who this lovely little one's mother is? Rippling Leaf wouldn't speak if his mate or her sibling when he came to visit us on our wait*."

Before Azurestar could say anything, Dovetail shoved her way to the front and immediately nudged Goslingpaw away roughly, saying, "*That's me! But- are you sure that disgrace is the one you were sent to find?*"

She wrinkled her nose at Goslingpaw, who flinched, before hurriedly dragging Swanpaw out in front of the two valley cats who simply stared at her in disbelief and astonishment.

"*Look at this angel; she'll be a better queen than that ugly, good for nothing healer! She's so much more beautiful and talented!*" Dovetail boasted, and Swanpaw puffed out her chest and smiled, showing off her pristine white fur.

Goslingpaw could see the rest of BlazeClan now either rolling their eyes or looking embarrassed behind Dovetail, and for once Swanpaw's friends looked like they'd rather be anywhere else but near the white she-cat.

Dovetail's reply was met with a snort, then a cackle of laughter coming from Russet Rush while his mate simply seemed to be very unimpressed and nudged the red tom slightly. "*What?*" Dovetail asked, genuinely puzzled. "*Am I wrong?*"

"*More beautiful? Please, I've seen so many pure white cats in the valley to the point your daughter's pelt is considered to be one of the commonest varieties in the Northern Kingdoms!*" He laughed.

"*There is nothing to sneer about being a healer either*," Splash Sprint meowed sternly, his earthy gaze hardening. "*Healers are the ones that help mother cats bring life to the world and heal others of injuries and ailments that bring them down*."

Splash Sprint took a step forward, one pair of wings, the larger one, arched elegantly over his head, and the other smaller pair tucked in neatly at his sides. "*Without healers, we would all be plagued by disease and injury, and that is no way to survive.*"

He narrowed his eyes at Dovetail, who was shocked by how fast the Valley Cats were to disagree with her. "*There is nothing more dishonourable in the Northern Kingdoms than making fun of a healer just because they chose that path*."

Upon hearing this, many of the BlazeClan cats shuffled their paws uncomfortably behind them. "*Besides*," Splash Sprint continued. "*Only the siblings with the royal markings can lead the tribe. And look at Goslingpaw*."

He gestured for her to lift her wings, and as the cream and brown she-cat did so, it revealed a white symbol of a flower looking similar to the sun.

"*W-well, Swanpaw has it too, don't you, darling?*" Dovetail spluttered as she turned to look at her younger daughter. Swanpaw blinked and began frantically looking at each of her shoulders and even her flank for a similar mark.

Nothing.

"*That's says it*," snorted Russet Rush derisively as Dovetail and

Swanpaw tried to protest and defend themselves.

"*Clearly only one cat was chosen, and that cat is Goslingpaw. Now no more wasting time as of now, we must get you all to safety and let you all gather your strength back.*"

"*I agree,*" meowed Splash Sprint. "*We should-*"

He was interrupted however, when Lilynose suddenly screamed. All heads turned to where the horrified Shine was facing, and immediately the BlazeClan Tom's began bristling in defence.

It was a dog.

# Chapter 2: Steam Power

Of every one of the most shocking things Goslingpaw had ever encountered in her entire life, this topped all of them.

The logical way to react by many would be to run or fight the approaching dog, but the whole of BlazeClan was in shock when the two toms instead went to *approach* the dog.

They watched on in horror as they saw the two toms stepping closer to the edge of the stone pavement where the dog stood. It had paused in its stride and was towering over the two smaller valley cats with an unreadable expression.

"*What are you doing?! Get back, you two! Get back!*" Shrieked Azurestar. "*Have you gone insane?*" Gustfang shouted.

"*Shut up, the lot of you!*" Russet Rush snapped. Then he went closer and tipped his head back and nosed his muzzle closer to the muzzle of the large black and white dog.

Goslingpaw had never felt more faint in her life. Suddenly, to her great astonishment, and to the shock of the BlazeClan cats, the dog began to speak.

*"Ichi'a cofairh'rrr chcuiae siwodicha?"* The massive canine rumbled in a sharp accent. *"Ja, prahorr nagisha en rheahu,"* replied Russet Rush in fluent Shadish.

*"Ahh. Nachthoa, amrahdi leferzundt,"* the dog chuckled lightly, then turned its sharp, steely gaze towards the cats of BlazeClan. Goslingpaw could smell the fear-scent of more than half the entire clan radiating behind her in waves.

*"Effen gundamyrr frisen nachtepsen?"* The dog grunted quizzically, turning back to look at the two valley cats. *"Tchi' hoa sepdi nachsun,"* replied Splash Sprint this time, making gestures with his paw and tail.

"*Are you following any of this?*" Aldertrail whispered as she bent down to Goslingpaw's height. The Littlepaw shook her head and blinked up at her foster mother. "*I'm afraid not*," she mumbled back, feeling more awkward than ever.

*"Nachsun! Bien nachsun! Ahh, prakk gwisjin yoka geolica,"* sighed the dog and it once again turned to the BlazeClan cats who were staring at them in confusion.

"*You, small cat with wings. You daughter of warrior Rippling Leaf?*" The dog finally asked in their language. "*Rippling Leaf! You know my dad?*" Gasped Goslingpaw. "*Ja, ja. Your father from Search-and-Rescue guild, I meet him before on solo mission.*"

"*Let me introduce her*," Splash Sprint meowed. "*This is Xiera. She's a kind soul and she knows our ways. Rest assured she won't hurt any of you.*"

"*A dog is still a dog!*" Protested Bearclaw, staring distrustfully at the massive black and white canine. But Xiera seemed less than bothered by the hostile response from the warrior, seeming more concerned about Cottonsong instead.

"*You, white cat. No, not the puny white midget, the one with four small kit. How old are babies?*" While Swanpaw had the funniest offended look at being called a midget, Cottonsong blinked and curled her tail over her kits protectively.

"*T-two and a quarter moons*," she mumbled. "*Here not safe for baby cat. I take you to den, safe shelter there*." Many of the cats still seemed sceptical, and Lichenfrost muttered, "*How can we trust you?*"

The white and black dog glanced around before saying, "*No other place for big cat group to stay. Dockside cats rude and stuck-up, alleys filthy and dangerous, quarry no place for kitten. I take you to my den in park, safest option*."

The massive canine paused and glanced at the tracks down in the dip of the platform. "*Iron beast will be here soon. Empty truck can fit cat friend, but must stay in truck.*" She turned and blinked at Splash Sprint.

"*You ride with no-wings or you fly with mate?*" She then questioned him. "*We'll be flying, duh*," laughed Russet Rush. "*Nothing like wind blowing in my fur that shows off my splendor!*"

Splash Sprint rolled his eyes humorously before he trotted over to Azurestar. "*Azurestar, there will be a metal beast the Tall-Limbs call a train coming soon. The driver tends to circle around the park Xiera stays in, so we will go there*."

"*I-I'm not sure*," Azurestar admitted. "*Won't the RoadWalkers try to capture us?*" "*Quite the contrary. The Tall-Limbs here are kind and respectful towards wildlife and they know to keep their distance when necessary*."

Suddenly, a great rumbling noise filled the air. Goslingpaw jolted up in alarm as the noise grew louder, and she saw Depthpaw cower in fright beside his father.

Then, her jaw dropped open as a colossal monster rolled to a stop at the structure. Behind, it hauled along a long tail of rectangular compartments; probably the trucks Xiera had mentioned.

The monster itself was painted bright yellow, and it had a cylindrical body attached to a flat platform with smaller structures holding it together. Behind the cylindrical structure was a box-like compartment where two humans stood, and it also towed along a larger rectangular structure behind it.

Giant wheels were what helped this colossal beast move, and atop its head sat something tall along with a dome shaped item and small golden trinkets near the box.

Immediately, one RoadWalker from the box leaned out and spotted Xiera, then smiled and hopped out to greet her. The dog's tail wagged happily as the RoadWalker approached her and used its hairless paws to brush at her head.

Goslingpaw would never understand what was so good about RoadWalker interaction, but she was relieved that Xiera was able to communicate with it enough. The RoadWalker paused and glanced at the BlazeClan cats, who warily stared back.

Suddenly, Splash Sprint leaped onto the RoadWalker's tall shoulders, earning a yelp of surprise. Confusion was visible on Goslingpaw's features as she watched the valley cat brush his head against the near-hairless creature's neck before purring.

Finally, after a minute, Xiera walked over. "*Human willing to transport us. He will put you in truck. No struggle and no jump out of truck, monster will crush you flat before you can scream 'nachtrhi shi'kia', or 'Stars help me' in your case*."

Then, she gestured for the cats to follow her towards the human. Hesitantly, they did, and Xiera leaped up into the first truck with a mighty bound.

Much to Goslingpaw's surprise, the RoadWalker was gentler than she expected. A soothing stream of gibberish babbles flowed from its mouth to try and calm the cats as it carefully picked one up at a time and put them into the truck.

It took a while, but finally Goslingpaw found herself being loaded into the truck with her foster parents, Cottonsong and her kits, Stonepaw, Softpaw and Slatepaw.

She watched as both red and blue valley cats lifted their wings straight up into a sharp V shape. Then they slashed downward in a power stroke and with a great whoosh of air, they were both aloft.

As the beast began to move with a guttural groan, she watched in awe as the two winged toms flapped their wings with nary a hint of a single sound and took off to the calm, cloud-filled sky.

Then, they were off. The monster set off at a suitable cruising speed and Goslingpaw felt her breath being taken away at the gorgeous scenery that rushed past.

Aside from impressive structures built by the RoadWalkers, there was so much greenery too. Trees with evergreen leaves rushed into sight, with thick moss covering their trunks and bushes shaping their roots.

Beside her, her foster father was watching over Stonepaw and

Slatepaw, who were both chattering away in excitement while Softpaw and Aldertrail helped Cottonsong keep her excited kits in line.

Goslingpaw smiled as she felt the winds brush between her fur and the lovely feeling it gave her, and as she glanced up to the sky she could see the shapes of the two valley cats soaring above, red and blue feathers only faintly outlined by the sun.

"*Will I be able to fly like that someday?*" She wondered aloud. "*With my feathers outlined by the sun, wind buffeting against my fur and the feeling of freedom so within reach?*"

A faint purr was heard from Azurestar as he leaned over and rested his head on hers. "*I believe you will, my dear*." His blue eyes shine with love for his foster daughter.

*"You will make a great queen someday."*

# Chapter 3: Cats Of Prey

It  felt like ages, but after a while the great metal beast stopped moving and halted. Peeking out of the truck, Goslingpaw marvelled at the flat stretch of land in front of her where trees and bushes grew abundantly.

She watched as Xiera leaped out of the truck while the tall RoadWalker alighted to get the BlazeClan cats out, and while she was still a slight bit more uncomfortable with RoadWalker contact she was grateful it at least made an effort to be gentle.

Finally as she was loaded off and put on the grass, she turned and stared up at the tall creature as it gently took the kits and placed them on the ground where Cottonsong was waiting.

The white-furred queen gently licked each one on the head, before blinking up and the RoadWalker and mewed a 'thank you' before scurrying off, herding her kittens with her.

She turned and trotted in the same direction as the queen as the beast took off, and stood kept pace by her side. Ripplekit brightened up instantly upon seeing her.

*"Goslingpaw! Hi!"* He squealed happily, and the cream and brown Littlepaw laughed in amusement at his excitement. "*Can you help my brother become a healer when he grows up?*" Mousekit suddenly asked with a small tilt of her head.

Goslingpaw felt her heart ache with a sense of longing at how Mousekit cared so much for her brothers, especially her oldest one. She had dreamed of having such a relationship with her sister but she knew that dream was definitely out of reach.

"*I'll see what I can do, hopefully I can convince Azurestar,*" she mewed gently to them. Happy squeaks we're heard from the kits and Cottonsong chuckled lightly at their antics.

"*Thank you, Goslingpaw, for helping me and these little bundles of joy grow these few moons*," the white queen spoke, voice filled with emotion. "*It's a pity their father is too blind to see how strong they've become now, particularly Mousekit.*"

"*She's a trooper,*" laughed Goslingpaw. "*Small but deadly*," the white she-cat added in amusement as they watched Mousekit playfully tumble Hailkit over with a squeaky battle cry.

As they wove their way through the tall grasses, Cottonsong finally picked up Ripplekit and Icekit by their scruffs and Goslingpaw did the same with Mousekit and Hailkit so they wouldn't get lost.

They finally made it into a clearing surrounded by willow trees and between the roots of two of them was a burrow that Xiera had dug.

The cats of BlazeClan were scattered across the area near the den, some lying down on the soft grass while others were perched by the tree roots grooming each other.

Goslingpaw watched as Swanpaw strode towards the burrow proudly, hoping to enter it first, until Xiera reached out a paw and swiftly pushed her aside, knocking her over in the process.

"*Hey!*" She spluttered. "*What was that for?!*" "*Mother cat and baby cat go into den first*," Xiera grunted. "*Baby cats need shelter more than you. You already grow up, why still need coddling like tiny, helpless and defenseless kitten?*"

As the white apprentice spluttered in disbelief, Xiera gestured for Cottonsong to enter the den, and as the white queen hesitantly did, Goslingpaw followed her to drop off her kits.

The den was large and surprisingly roomy, with a decently flat ground of dirt and stone swathed with moss and ferns and broken feathers to make nests.

Carefully, Cottonsong treaded over to a large clump of ferns and moss, then settled down and placed her kittens at her belly before nosing each of them gently.

Goslingpaw treaded over and as carefully as she could she placed

both Mousekit and Hailkit at their mother's belly and dipped her head respectfully to the white queen before she headed out of the den.

The massive black and white dog gazed down at her, and the cream and brown Littlepaw forced herself not to shake. "*Now, you come with me. Is time for talk.*"

Azurestar blinked and stepped forward protectively, but Xiera interrupted him before he could even speak a single word. "*You no need worry about her. I no hurt cats, mischacht?*"

The silver tom stared distrustfully at the large canine, then down at his foster daughter with worry in his eyes. The smaller she-cat blinked and stretched her muzzle up to bump it with his.

"*I'll be alright,*" she promised. Azurestar blinked down at her, and sighed before stepping aside. Glancing up at the dog, she watched as Xiera gestured for her to follow.

She trotted after the canine to a more private area surrounded by bushes, and the dog flopped down to a resting position while she sat down. "*Now, you daughter of Rippling Leaf. You have siblings?*"

*"Y-yes, the white cat you stopped from going into the den earlier." "Hreggh! That cat no place as royalty in Northern Kingdoms,"* scoffed the black and white canine scornfully. "*No cat follow her rule with bad attitude like that.*"

Goslingpaw blinked in surprise. She was used to others usually scorning in her face that her sister was better so hearing any other creature tell her otherwise was pretty refreshing.

The dog leaned down again and gazed gently at her. "*Besides, that cat no trace of fighter, no trace of bravery or courage whatsoever. Disappointment. You...*"

The dog gently nosed her. "*Every cat that take one look at you can see your father in you. You know he was commander of biggest division in war of Fern Island?*"

Her eyes lit up. "*The war where the valley cats fought against those cats*

*with dark manipulation powers they used for evil instead of good?*" Her tail twitched with excitement. She had no idea her father had been a war commander.

"*Machntrhia!*" The dog laughed. "*He awarded medal of bravery for flying headfirst into enemy troop and shattering their strongest forces. He have very powerful elements you know*."

Xiera chuckled. "*You healer, yes?*" Goslingpaw shuffled her paws and nodded quietly. "*I'm not pretty enough to be a Shine or a Starpaw, and I don't think I can ever be strong enough to become a warrior*," she mumbled.

"*Nonsense, child! Why want be useless toy for toms? You are fighter, stronger than most of your clan. You possess vast knowledge in one of the best places regarded of high position in the Northern Kingdoms. You are perfect*," Xiera responded.

"*Remember, small wren, beauty mean nothing in Northern Kingdoms. You can be most dazzling cat there is and no cat in Northern Kingdoms will bat an eye. And strength is different when you are strong in actions rather than physique*."

She leaned down and touched her black nose to the small she-cat's head. "*Now let us head back, small wren. Am sure valley cats would bring back prey now*."

Gently easing herself to her paws, Goslingpaw treaded alongside the black and white canine as they made their way over to the den in the willow clearing.

Goslingpaw couldn't overcome the shock of seeing the massive amount of prey sitting in the center of the clearing where many cats were gathered, similar looks of shock plastered on their faces.

"*All this done by two cats?*" She asked incredulously. "*Valley cats strong in hunting, love and war*," laughed Xiera, watching as Splash Sprint and Russet Rush spiralled in with a massive hawk and a huge hare.

*"Go on, eat now. Bellies must be full; in mountains the prey scrawny and*

*can't feed well."*

# Chapter 4: Power Flight

Hours had passed since BlazeClan set up temporary shelter in Xiera's den. The clan cats had eaten and were all rested, with the more vulnerable cats inside the den while the others were scattered around the clearing near it.

The Claws mostly lay around near the trees, watching out for any danger while those with apprentices gave them small sparring assignments to carry out.

The Shines and Starpaws were busy preening themselves, especially Dovetail fussing over Swanpaw to make her fur pristine again, and the Nettles were all dozing together in a circle, tails entwined over each other as a form of reassurance.

And Goslingpaw? She had been taken to a more private area out of sight from BlazeClan by Russet Rush, and he was now teaching her to do power takeoffs from the ground.

"*More flap, deeper flap. Your wings must almost meet on the upstroke of the flap...*" the russet tom directed. The young Littlepaw was exhausted. This was much harder than anything she had ever been taught in her life.

"*I know you're tired, but us valley cats know the sky as our second home. You have to build your muscles*." Russet Rush blinked down at her, and she saw a kindly glimmer in his stormy blue eyes.

"*That's why I am not having you practice branching; you've already long grown past the stage of gliding down from a tree. You have to develop your power-flight skills. So try it again.*"

"*In the sky you will feel the mass of air as it moves around your wings. You can sense its speed, if it is bumpy or smooth, even hot or cold. And you will know how to shape it and use it*," he explained.

"*Wind.. has shape?*" Goslingpaw had never heard of such a thing

before. "*Wind always has shape but in some places the air is still and dead, so you must work extra hard to give it shape with power strokes. Your downstroke is usually your most powerful*."

"*On your upstroke, you want the air to flow through easily. That is why you have those feathers with tip slots at the end of your wings. They separate and let you go up easily*." Russet Rush meowed before he demonstrated.

He pressed forward just a bit, extended his head, and lifted his wings before launching himself upwards. And that was it—he was suddenly airborne. Twice the small cream and brown Littlepaw's size or more, yet he seemed to float up effortlessly.

Goslingpaw blinked, then tried once more. She could feel the air parting above her, and tried to imagine bursting into the welcoming calm of the cloud filled sky.

Soon, she began to sense the contours of the bubble of air that formed beneath each wing and buoyed her up into the air above the ground.

It filled her mind; the power downstroke, bunching together of the slots on the leading edge of her primaries, upstroke, the spacing of those same feathers so the air could pass through with no drag.

Russet Rush chuckled. "*You will become very muscular from all this practice. Soon you will be a magnificent flier like your father*."

Pride swelled in Goslingpaw's heart at those words. She watched as Russet Rush took two more power strokes to get to the branches of a nearby tree, and he lighted down without even rustling a leaf.

Goslingpaw beat her wings after him, trying to mimic his powerful strokes and lighted down on the branch. The leaves rustled noisily as she scrambled to get a proper foothold on a more secure part of the tree branch.

"*A little noisy there, but you'll get the hang of it*," Russet Rush reassured her. Goslingpaw blinked and folded her wings back awkwardly. "*I don't know; seems like it's so hard to make a quiet*

*landing or silent flights*."

Russet Rush chuckled. "*I knew a scouter from the Guild named Cricketfin, a spotted russet and ginger cat with turqoise eyes. Extremely noisy when she first started; when she flew you could hear her from more than a league away*."

He smiled fondly and chuckled, "*Now no cat can hear her coming even when she's nearby, that's what makes her one of the most feared assassins in the Northern Kingdoms*."

He draped a wing over her gently, and the cream and brown she-cat was reminded of how her father did that to her when she saw him in the Tribe of Shining Suns.

The main difference was that Russet Rush had sleeker feathers with not as much fluffy down as her father, and his feathers had barbs at their tips that radiated a strange comforting heat.

"*Practice makes perfect, small wren. Remember that. Now, again. Lift off!*" With a swift motion, the russet tom arched his wings up and with a swift slam, launched himself into the air.

Quickly, Goslingpaw scrambled to her paws and steadied herself before arching her wings and swiftly slamming them down like the older tom had done, barreling into the sky after him with a call of' "*wait for me!*"

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The calming blue sky soon faded to a calming shade of pink and lilac and orange, while the fiery disc that was the sun set over the horizon, being swallowed by the sea.

"*Twixt time*," called out Russet Rush from down below on the field as Goslingpaw performed a double twist in the air within his sight. "*Let's go back.*"

The seven-moon old healer trainee nodded and soared in to land beside the russet tom. He broke into a run and she swiftly followed as he wove his way through the tall grass as agile as a doe.

The ring of willow trees soon came into view, and Goslingpaw let out a purr of excitement as she broke through the thin grass that grew around the trees.

The first thing she saw was her foster father pacing around the clearing with his tail twitching behind him, her foster mother perched on a stone beside him.

The moment those blue eyes met her own amber-green ones, he gave a smile of joy and ran to her quickly, her foster mother bounding to her paws and running to her as well.

As both cats affectionately nosed their foster daughter, Aldertrail asked, "*How was flying practise? Did you injure yourself?*" Goslingpaw smiled and shook her head, and Aldertrail breathed a sigh of relief.

Russet Rush had gone off to greet his blue-furred mate, and Goslingpaw watched as he gently brushed his head underneath Splash Sprint's own with an explosion of soft purring coming from both toms.

As her parents ushered her away to a place they chose to rest near Xiera's den, only one thought rushed through the little she-cat's head.

*"I'm going to be like my father."*

# Chapter 5: Withering Feathers

"*Tell me about the queen, please*," Goslingpaw meowed eagerly as she sat by Russet Rush, who purred in amusement, stormy blue eyes shining cheerfully.

They had just completed another flying lesson, and now the two winged cats were resting by the tall willow tree that seemed to attract more birds than the others.

With the presence of the winged cats though, they seemed less excited about perching there now.

Presently, she was now asking for the russet tom to tell her about her home tribe, though she first wanted to know about the current tribal queen, her cousin and biggest possible challenge.

"*Well, one thing to note about Queen Glacier Storm is that she is one of the strongest, most experienced and vicious warrios of the valley. No cat even dares to oppose her strongminded ideals as well as powerful claws, not even her own brother*."

He licked her ear gently before continuing, "*She isn't just strong, clever and tactical, but also intimidating, composed and never hesitates to take action. Unlike most who usually have one or two specifically developed skills, she is versitaile and adaptable to any situations*."

"*Any?*" She asked, surprised. "*Any. You could throw her into a pit of adders with her wings ripped clean off to the bone, and she'll claw her way directly to the top with her bare paws, no hesitation at all*."

He paused, then glanced up at Swanpaw who was bragging away about her fur a good distance away.

"*And she's also widely regarded as the most beautiful and confident leader that has led our tribe as well, so your sister has some competition,*" he whispered cheekily to her.

Goslingpaw giggled, and was about to ask something else but she felt something odd drop from her left wing.

She wheeled around and saw a feather, one of her primary coverts, lying on the ground. "*Great Stars! What's happening to me?*"

She stared in a mixture of dismay and horror as another smaller covert then slipped lazily to the ground after the first one. The cream and brown she-cat began to tremble uncontrollably and gasp at this sight.

"*What in Feronia's name is going on in here?*" Splash Sprint said as he flew into the den. "*Splash Sprint! I'm so glad you're here.*" "*What's the matter, little wren?*" Goslingpaw straightened up and tried to look brave. She gulped and then blinked several times

"*Splash Sprint, I hate to tell you this but...but I think I am dying*." "*Dying? What in Aquila's Guardianship are you talking about? You look perfectly healthy to me.*" Goslingpaw nodded toward her paws and then bent down and picked up one of the feathers.

"*What about this, Splash Sprint? How.. how can any cat explain this?*" He stared at her, stunned. "*Explain it? What's to explain? You're molting your feathers, that's all.*" "*Molting?*" The Hydro sighed deeply. "*Hasn't my loudmouth mate told you about this?*"

*"No."* At this, Russet Rush looked to the side quickly, humming as if he hadn't been there the whole time. The blue-furred tom rolled his eyes and let out a deep sigh.

*"First of all, it's natural."*

*"You mean I'm not ill? I'm not going to die?"*

*"Never from molting. Molting is a sign of maturity. When cryptids are still young, their first fluffy down falls off and their wings get pretty unsightly."*

"*Then what's this?*" She picked up the fallen feathers and held them up in front of the valley cat. "*These aren't down. These.. they're all important flight feather, aren't they?*"

"*When feathers get old and worn you shed them. New feathers will be coming in a short time*." "*When?*" He sighed again. "*Please don't be so impatient, dear. It'll be a few days.*"

Goslingpaw breathed a sigh of relief. "*So I'm not sick?*" Splash Sprint shook his head gently and chuckled. "*Of course not, little fledgling. You remind me so much of Fern, Plover and Rask when they had their first molts*."

"*Who?*" "*Fern is an apprentice from our tribe and both Rask and Plover are trainees from the Kin Of The Restless Veil,*" explained Splash Sprint as he used the special edge on his talon-like claws to comb through the feathers.

Preening was one of the most pleasant social interactions a cryptid could have. As the blue-grey tom picked through the feathers, he was careful to examine for any ruptured shafts where feathers might have broken away.

"*You're shedding mostly your primary coverts, little wren. No need to worry any further*," Splash Sprint assured her. Turning to his russet-furred mate, he added, "*Lay off flying lessons for the next few days until her new feathers bud in again*."

Russet Rush nodded, but was distracted when Azurestar and Aldertrail came running. "*Goslingpaw!*" Cried Azurestar in alarm. "*Your wings- what happened to them?! Why are your feathers falling out?!*"

"*Son of the God of Stars, please save me,*" sighed Splash Sprint as he continued combing through Goslingpaw's wings while shooting a pleading glance at his mate.

With a raucous laugh, Russet Rush turned to the two horrified parents and started to explain.

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"*Oh, I'm so relieved to know she's okay,*" sighed Aldertrail as she then smothered Goslingpaw's pelt with swift, affectionate licks. "*Mom!*" Cried the cream and brown Littlepaw, squirming around to avoid her mother's tongue.
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She never particularly liked being groomed by others, not even her foster parents. She would rather do it herself and make herself look meat and tidy on her own.

While Azurestar and Russet Rush chuckled, Splash Sprint tilted his head inquisitively at the beautiful brown and white she-cat as if he was studying a specimen of rare flower.

"*Pardon me for asking*," he meowed. "*But are you and Azurestar Goslingpaw's foster parents?*"

This caught the both of them off-guard, and hesitantly, both nodded. "*Yes, we are. Why did you ask that?*" Azurestar queried.

"*Ah. I was just wondering which cats are responsible for raising such a fierce-spirited and brave little she-cat*," he answered, smiling gently down at Goslingpaw.

"*It seemed highly unlikely that such a brave and spirited little one would be raised by a disgraceful she-cat like her*," added Russet Rush as he flicked his tail over to Dovetail, who was shamelessly trying to seduce Thornslash to no avail.

Splash Sprint gave a soft sigh. "*It's a shame we can't say the same for her sister. She's too far gone at this rate*." Russet Rush nodded. "*In the Northern Kingdoms I'm positive both of them won't even last a day.*"

Goslingpaw wasn't sure why she felt a shiver slip up her spine at those words.

# Chapter 6: Lift Your Wings

A week had passed; Goslingpaw's new coverts had grown in nicely, though that hadn't stopped her from complaining about how much it ached when they began to bud.

She has grown stronger over the last couple of days and she could now fly for quite some distance, which is another bit of praise she received from the two strong fliers of the Northern Kingdoms.

With a satisfied smile she remembered the look of absolute jealousy on Swanpaw's face when Russet Rush loudly praised her in front of the whole clan for her fast learning.

The white she-cat had looked like she wanted to explode with sheer jealousy but had surprisingly managed to keep it in, probably to not make a fool out of herself in front of the legendary warriors of the great Northern Kingdoms.

Presently, she was sitting with Aldertrail enjoying some bonding time together with her mentor when soft footsteps behind announced the arrival of Splash Sprint.

"*Good light, ma'am Aldertrail,*" he meowed politely. "*Oh, good.. light? Good light, yes, Splash Sprint. Do you need something?*"

The blue-gray warrior smiled gently and responded, "*I was wondering if I could possibly.. ah, borrow Goslingpaw for a while. I want to show her around Sunnyville.*"

"*Why?*" The brown she-cat questioned, puzzled. "*It does her no good cooping her here like this, wouldn't you say? Let her stretch her wings and explore.*"

He tilted his head. "*Now is also the best time to teach her navigation as well. She will need it even more in the Northern Kingdoms*."

Aldertrail still looked doubtful, but she nodded her approval. "*I'll*

*explain to Azurestar when he returns from his hunting journey, my dear*," she crooned softly to her foster daughter, and she smiled up at her foster mother gently.

The cream and brown she-cat carefully slunk out from under her foster mother's chin, and followed the Stormfast Isles warrior as he sauntered off to the area near the tracks of the iron monster that had brought them there days ago.

Around her, she could hear whispered of jealousy come from the apprentices and the envious stares she was receiving burning on her pelt, and a sense of satisfaction washed over her.

As she met up with Russet Rush though, there was great rustling and all of a sudden the Slate and Stone brothers barrelled out towards her.

"*Gos! Gos! Can we come with you?*" Stonepaw asked excitedly as he began bouncing up and down on his paws. Goslingpaw blinked in surprise. "*Um.. as much as I want to say yes, exactly how are you going to come with us?*" She asked.

"*They can ride on our backs; an albatross ride, as we call them back in the Northern Kingdoms*," chuckled Splash Sprint. "*What! They could mess up my splendid fur*," moaned Russet Rush.

Splash Sprint rolled his hazel-amber eyes and gave an exaggerated sigh. "*My dear, giving a no-wing an albatross ride is certainly better than forcing them to run below and risk their lives on the train tracks*."

Russet Rush sagged slightly. "*Fine*," he sulked. Bending down, he let Slatepaw climb onto his back while Stonepaw excitedly clambered onto Splash Sprint's back.

"*Do your parents and mentors know you've gone?*" Questioned Splash Sprint shortly after they launched themselves into the air.

"*Nope! We want to hang out with Goslingpaw; we haven't gotten to bond with her since she began flying,*" replied Slatepaw.

"*Very bold, the both of you*," chuckled the blue-grey tom. "*Exactly what we need as warriors in the Northern Kingdoms*." Goslingpaw

could almost see Stonepaw swell with pride while Slatepaw blinked in amazement.

They flew for a while before Splash Sprint ordered, "*Now you two rascals hang tight; Goslingpaw, veer left. We're going to show you how we get prey when hunting doesn't have the best results for us*."

Angling her wings to the left, Goslingpaw followed Russet Rush and Splash Sprint as they spiralled down in front of a structure painted red and white.

The smell of fish and some strange meat wafted up her nose, and Goslingpaw felt herself being overwhelmed by the new scents. The two Granite brothers seemed pretty disgusted with the scent, however.

"*Yuck! What's that smell?*" Stonepaw gagged, making a comically disgusted face. "*Fish*," scowled Russet Rush, shooting a nasty glare at a tall RoadWalker nearby holding something in its large hairless paws smelling strongly of it.

Splash Sprint carefully sniffed the air, before meowing, "*Skipjack tuna, from the likeliness of it. The Tall-Limbs here do fish, but thankfully they don't overdo it and end up overfishing*."

"*Why is it bad to overfish? Isn't it like having more prey?*" Asked Slatepaw. "*Overfishing is bad, small one. If the Tall-Limbs overfish, there won't be enough left for us. We have many mouths to feed in the Northern Kingdoms, you know,*" Splash Sprint answered.

"*Furthermore, it affects the ecosystem and causes dents in the marine life population. It can even cause overpopulation of other species and ultimately harm the seas*," he continued.

"*The same applies to other ecosystems, so that's why we never waste food in the valley; everything is eaten clean to the bone*," Russet Rush added. "*Even carrion?*" Stonepaw gasped.

"*Even rotting buzzard-feed. Nothing goes to waste. It's usually the Golden Rose Cult that handles rotting prey or dead rotting bodies; the stories you hear of them being cannibalistic is not just something to scare*

*kits at night*," yawned Russet Rush.

As they began moving, Goslingpaw asked curiously, "*But won't they get sick from eating rotting food?*" Splash Sprint shook his head. "*They won't. They have impressively strong immunity systems and they rarely get sick*."

With a nod of understanding, Goslingpaw followed the two larger valley cats as they led her and her friends to the side of the large RoadWalker structure where a large red rectangle was situated.

With a swift sweep of his tail, Splash Sprint quickly brushed all three apprentices to the wall before turning to his mate. "*You doing it this time or am I?*" He queried gently.

"*Could you do it this time, my love? My fur is especially splendid today under the sun; I don't want some grimy fish muck splattered on my lovely red fur*," Russet Rush replied, making the eyes of the wounded kitten to his mate.

"*You and your fur*," laughed Splash Sprint humorously. He gently butted his mate on the head before turning to the large red block and began to meow loudly, even scrabbling on its surface with his claws.

Suddenly, the block swung inwards, and a tall RoadWalker with curly black fur on its head peered out. Again, Splash Sprint meowed very loudly, and the huge creature glanced down in surprise.

As it spoke its gibberish language to the blue-grey tom, he loudly purred and brushed his head gently against the large creature's near hairless paw, earning a delighted burst of gibberish again.

The three apprentices shrank back in disbelief at how easily the Northern warrior could charm a RoadWalker of all creatures into giving him food.

Moments later, the tall creature reached out again and laid a fish and something else that smelled quite delicious in front of the blue-grey cryptid tom.

Splash Sprint meowed his thanks and picked up the fish, which had

clear eyes, shiny scales and very red gills while glancing at his mate.

Russet Rush stood up and picked up the other food item in his jaws before quickly retreating back. Unlike his mate he did not like the RoadWalker contact and was never comfortable with it for the thought of grimy things touching his fur was horrendous.

As the block swung back into place, the two Northern warriors gently guided the three younger cats away before leading them to a more secluded area where there were no RoadWalkers in sight.

"*Here, eat up. You'll need your energy later,*" Splash Sprint meowed as he nosed Stonepaw. "*But.. don't we need to take the prey back to the clan? Our code says that our clan comes first*," Slatepaw interjected.

"*It's alright. I'll explain to your leader later. Besides, I don't think your clan eats fish or chicken that was tampered with by the Tall-Limbs*," chuckled Splash Sprint.

Hesitantly, Stonepaw leaned down and took a bite of the chicken while his brother immediately sank his teeth into the tail of the fish. Goslingpaw was hesitant on both.

"*Don't be picky, dear. Fish is good for you; skipjack tuna helps your body to function*," he coaxed her gently into trying a bite of the fish. Glancing at Stonepaw, who seemed incredibly awed at the taste of fish, she took her first bite.

Immediately, a rich and sweet burst of flavour exploded into her mouth, and the firm meat seemed to soften greatly the more she chewed it. "*Wow.. it's amazing!*" She gasped.

"*Right?*" Laughed Stonepaw as he eagerly took another large bite near the fish's head. "*Leave some for us!*" Chuckled Splash Sprint lightly as he leaned down and took a chunk of the tuna as well.

For the rest of the day, the two tribe cats brought the three apprentices around Sunnyville and gathered the freshest scraps of food from the kind RoadWalkers before they were flown back to the den where their beloved clan stayed waiting.

# Chapter 7: Mother's Love

A great rumbling was enough to rouse the Littlepaw from her slumber as she jolted right awake. "*No need to worry,*" hollered Russet Rush from his perch up in a tree.

"*What do you mean no need to worry?!*" Cried Swanpaw. "*There's a monster coming! A great beast! We must run; they'll come for my fur and the kits!*" Dovetail nodded in agreement, looking frantic.

"*What monster? It's just steam train headed this way to deliver stones to docks*," Xiera sighed in annoyance from her spot near the tree roots.

"*Is cat really so stupid you cannot tell train apart from real monster?*"

Nearby, Stonepaw and Slatepaw began giggling, only for Gustfang to clout the both of them over the head and scold them, "*Don't be rude you rascals!*"

As they rubbed the spots on their heads that had been hit, the rumbling got louder and soon another metal beast similar to the one they had rode to get to the park pulled up.

It didn't stop, however, only slowing down, and from this great blue beast's cab, two cats nimbly leapt out and scampered swiftly across the grass after yowling their thanks to the RoadWalkers inside.

It became evident that one of these cats was possibly a loner or a rogue while the other was a RoadWalker pet judging how raggedy the first one looked and how well-fed the other seemed.

The cat that bounded ahead was a solid gray-brown she-cat with dark blue eyes while the other was a plump tawny molly with a white underbelly, green eyes and golden-brown leg stripes.

Instead of greeting them with hostility however, Splash Sprint and Russet Rush immediately flew down from their perches and yowled out their welcome.

"*Flora! Bella! Good light to you!*" Yowled Russet Rush with a grin.

"*Good light, Russet Rush, you handsome fellow!*" Shouted the scraggly gray-brown she-cat with a laugh as she skidded to a halt before nosing the red tom with a wide grin on her face.

The RoadWalker cat, visibly shorter than her scraggly companion, reached upwards as Splash Sprint lowered his head to touch noses with her. "*Hello, Splash Sprint.*" "*Greetings, Bella*," he purred back.

The blue-grey tom turned back and called out, "*No need to be skeptical, Flora and Bella are kind cats*."

He gave Goslingpaw a cheeky smile before adding, "*You might also know Bella as the very mother of one of our tribe's royal advisors Foxglove Heart, if you like listening to our stories.*"

This was enough to change everything.

Within moments Stonepaw and Slatepaw had excitedly ran up to the surprised tawny she-cat and began peppering her with excited questions while the BlazeClan cats came from their resting areas in awe.

"*You're really Foxglove Heart's mother?*" Softpaw whispered in awe as she came up to Bella. "*Why, of course I am!*" She purred back.

"*My son certainly hasn't let me down; this is his true destiny though I do wish he had stayed with me a while longer.*"

The plump, tawny she-cat sighed. "*My dearest son used to be so scorned here for his tail even when he was still kneading at my belly for milk, and now he is known as a hero beyond compare. As a mother I feel so proud of him.*"

Lionpaw's eyes suddenly went wide. "*Hang on a minute. Didn't Foxglove Heart fly as the windward sub-commander of a division during the war of the Golden Rose?*"

Flora gave a raucous laugh that sent the pigeons nearby quickly scattering into the air.

"*Even the youngsters these days know more than some of the stupid dockside cats here who lived here their whole life!*" She chortled.

*"Yes, he did indeed fly as the sub-commander of the Hellion-speed division, and he fought so magnificently you couldn't tell he had not been Tribe-born!*"

"*Not as magnificently as me, I should say,*" hummed Russet Rush pridefully. "*Yeah, not like Skriffei called you crazy after you freaked out over your fur in the midst of the bloody battlefield*," snorted Splash Sprint humorously.

"*I am not weird!*" Protested the russet cat. Flora and Xiera snorted with a chuckle. "*Mate, you're weird on a good fur day—*"

"*Downright crazy on a bad one,*" Flora finished. Xiera grinned at Russet Rush's flustered expression as she continued. "*—and we know as you can handle yourself just fine—*"

"*Then again, you can be just as weird as my other son Oscar too sometimes*," Bella cuts in. Russet Rush groaned and swatted at the tawny she-cat half-heartedly as she dodged and laughed.

BlazeClan seemed relieved in a way that these new strangers had no malevolent intentions, and slowly began to gather around them.

Gustfang quickly herded his two excited younger sons towards him and hushed their excited questions quickly, placing a paw over Stonepaw's mouth when he didn't quiet down.

"*How about my son, Splash Sprint?*" Flora questioned, gazing over at the sleek blue-grey tom. "*How is my precious Kunzite doing? Is he alright? Eating well?*"

"*Your son is being raised alongside Tait by Agate from the Guild of Freedom and his mate Taraka from the Golden Rose Cult, rest assured they are raising him well and he is healthy*," Splash Sprint reassured her.

"*Aren't they from different tribes?*" Cragshade muttered. "*How can two cats from two different tribes raise kits together without causing a lot of problems and trouble?*"

"*There's a lot you misunderstand about the Valley Cats, isn't there?*" Chuckled Flora.

"*The tribes are perfectly fine with cats finding mates in the other tribes, and will gladly allow cats to switch tribes to be with one another, or to find a home where they can properly use their skills*."

Murmurs of surprise spread across the group. It was evident they hadn't heard about this before. "*You said you gave up your son to the Valley Cats to raise?*" Cottonsong probed gently as she gazed at Flora in wonder.

Flora chuckled and nodded. "'*Course I did.*" The white she-cat gaped at the taller, scragglier she-cat in amazement.

"*How.. how could you even find the will to do that? As a mother, isn't that just too.. painful?*" Cottonsong whispered.

"*Yes. But it was also because the quarry I stay in has no room for a kitten. You must understand that it is noisy there all day and there is the great danger of stones and rocks falling over and crushing the bones of any unfortunate creature,*" she answered.

She flicked a torn ear. "*My son was a bright young one. I wanted him to be raised by cats with a true life purpose instead of being stuck in a dusty and dangerous quarry with me. So when Splash Sprint came by with his tribemate Leaf Wing on a mission I gave him to them*."

"*Don't you miss him?*" Goslingpaw asked softly. *"It must hurt not being able to see your one and only child."*

Flora smiled and replied, "*It hurts, yes. But I am fuelled by the fact that he's alive and healthy, and it is enough to make me happy.*"

Goslingpaw gazed at the wise, scraggly she-cat in wonder. As the rest of the clan came forward to ask questions and get to know the two cats better, Goslingpaw looked up at the sky.

"*Would I be happier raised by Azurestar and Aldertrail, or would I be happier with Rippling Leaf up in the clouds?*" She wondered.

And yet, as the faint voice streamed into her ears, singing their

setting sun harmony for only her to hear, she knew that was a question she could never answer.

# Chapter 8: The Switching

"*Stretch out your wings, let me see*," Splash Sprint murmured gently as Goslingpaw stretched her wings out for him to examine.

After getting over the initial shock of losing her feathers, now she was undergoing a check to make sure the lost feathers had grown back in perfect condition.

"*Coverts coming in nicely, Goslingpaw. Very nice tip slots developing there between the primaries. Essential for drag control, especially during those turbulent conditions. Your barbs are still quite soft but they'll stiffen up eventually*."

Goslingpaw sighed in relief as she folded them back. She watched as the larger blue-grey tom before her sat down and began to preen his own feathers.

Splash Sprint's feathers were beautiful, sleek and glossy and curved at the edges unlike Russet Rush's, which were sharp and barbed. This observation caused Goslingpaw to cock her head curiously.

She knew every cryptid had different wings, but she had been told by Azurestar, who had been most familiar with the legends, that the primary difference between toms and she-cats with feathered wings were, of course, their feathers.

She-cats tended to have feathers curved at the tips, with a slight bit more fluffy down than toms and small sharp barbs reinforcing the tips of their primaries and secondaries. Toms on the other claw, had sleeker, sharper tipped feathers and slightly larger wingspans than she-cats did.

They lacked most of the fluffy down to help trap heat to keep warm, however, and in some cases tended to have more feathers than they could manage.

Goslingpaw even remembered that her foster father had once said

that cryptids who identified as the.. third option, as he put it, had wings with feather tips diagonally slashed down with longer 'ribbon feathers' at their secondaries.

Splash Sprint interested her. She had studied his wings before when she was trying to recap what Russet Rush had taught her about flying, and she found more differences in both toms' wings in the process.

From mere glances Goslingpaw could clearly see that Splash Sprint lacked the sharp tips on his feathers that slashed through the air, instead having softly rounded tips that were slightly storm-tattered.

And though he was fortunate to have two pairs of wings, Russet Rush's wingspan obviously outranked both pairs of his wings in size, something he was never quiet about.

And although Splash Sprint did not have that much fluffy down, she knew that the reason for that was because he plucked it off at night. Many times already, she had seen him shred out clawfuls of down to make the nest comfortable enough for Cottonsong and her kits with his own jaws, and she winced every time he did so.

So, she decided to ask.

"*Splash Sprint?*" "*Yes?*" He lifted his head up from his feathers and fixed her with his piercing amber-hazel gaze curiously.

"*How come your feathers are more like a.. she-cat's than a tom's? Did something happen?*" She queried awkwardly, afraid that the Northern warrior would get offended.

He blinked in surprise for a minute, before chuckling awkwardly. "*Well, you see, little one, I did formerly identify as a she-cat,*" he purred with a gentle smile.

Goslingpaw felt her jaw drop open. "*You what?*" She gasped. "*I used to be a she-cat*," the beautiful blue-grey tom laughed gently, his voice chiming like a boreal owl's.

"*Being a she-cat had never really felt right to me; I always felt... out of place as a she-cat. It didn't help that I was one of the only kits who were*

*female in the nursery at the time, making things very awkward indeed.*"

The blue-gray tom breathed out deeply. "*My mother Cunning Storm and my father Sly Whisker were oblivious to my insecurity. In fact, they were highly against it too."* He wrinkled his nose and added sourly, "*They found the idea of cats of the same gender being mates simply repulsive, let alone switching genders*."

"*My younger twin brother Zephyr Whistle was the only one who really understood. He never felt the same way as I but he saw no wrong in being who you really feel like being unless it's simply too outrageous*."

Goslingpaw blinked as Splash Sprint slumped down into a resting position. *"Cunning Storm was persistent in getting me to grow up and find a mate to give her grandchildren though I didn't like the idea."*

*"The main reason for this was because she wanted heirs to continue our family's legacy of being strong, confident Hydros and secure a high-ranking spot in the tribe. As we grew older I began to despise being a she-cat even more. Sly Whisker started forcing me to go out on 'dates' with toms, some who I had barely spoken to and most who weren't even my age."*

Splash Sprint paused, and gave a visible shudder. "*Every single one of those 'dates' ended in me feeling uncomfortable as ever."*

*"Shortly after we became warriors, Zephyr Whistle got into a fight with our parents. He'd found a mate, a tom named Auburn Thistle who had black marbled tabby fur with orange eyes like the hottest fires. Cunning Storm and Sly Whisker were enraged that their son had went against their wishes of providing them with grandkits, and it was there and then they disowned him. Frankly, I think my brother was more glad rather than upset."*

Splash Sprint paused before his hazel eyes clouded slightly with misty memories, similar to the stars that strung across the sky at night like glowing stones on black satin.

"*With Zephyr Whistle out of the picture they pressured me instead. They kept forcing me to hurry up and mate with some high-ranking tom so they could have grandchildren, and soon I got so stressed to the point I*

*ran away from the tribe so I could have some form of peace with myself."*

*"I ended up visiting the Spirit-Seeker Pool that night, where I just prayed to be able to become who I wanted to be. I didn't want to be a she-cat; it didn't feel right to me. I just wanted to feel at ease being.. me."*

A soft chuckle escaped his jaws. "*The next day I awoke and to my delight, the spirits had granted my desire. I was like a carbon copy of Zephyr Whistle, more masculine than feminine."*

His ear twitched gently and his soft gaze drew over to his wings. "*The only thing that never changed was my feathers; a reminder that there would always be a piece of my former self I could never get rid of."*

*"When I went back to camp, obviously my parents flew into a rather undignified, frenzied rage. They demanded I go back to become a she-cat again, or I mate with a she-cat and end up having kits for them. I refused because there was no way I could have kits either way and that day was the day my parents lost both their children*."

Splash Sprint blinked down at Goslingpaw, who was staring up at him in wonder. "*Little wren, you must remember to stay true to your heart, and just be who you are*."

His tail coiled gently under her chin and lifted it up so those brilliant hazel eyes gazed directly into those clear amber-green ones.

"*There will always be cats out there who support you for being yourself.*"

# Chapter 9: What You Know

"*Goslingpaw?*"

The little squeaky voice of Mousekit tore the cream and brown she-cat from her thoughts. Turning her head, she saw Hailkit and Mousekit both standing patiently behind her, little tails held high in the air.

"*Yes?*" "*Dad came by earlier and spat at us just now,*" Hailkit meowed tentatively. "*Why did he say that Mousekit would never amount to anything?*"

Goslingpaw flinched. Leave it to Stormslash to disrupt his own kits' peaceful lives.

"*Well...*" she winced, not knowing how to explain BlazeClan's idiotic social ranks to these two innocent kits who both hadn't seen much about their own clan's behaviour.

"*It's.. the way most toms think in BlazeClan*," she began. "*Our ancestors decided long ago that toms belonged higher up on the ranks, fighting and hunting, and she-cats.. had to stay at the bottom and do measly jobs like healing and kitting*."

*"But that's stupid!"* Piped up Hailkit. *"Mousekit can fight as well as any tom can!"* The little brown she-kit puffed up her fur before adding, "*And Ripplekit can be a good healer when he grows up!*"

Goslingpaw chuckled quietly. Secretly she was contemplating asking Azurestar to let her mentor Ripplekit when he grew old enough.

"*Well*," she began carefully. "*Different cats have different ways of thinking. BlazeClan hierarchy has always been holding toms above she-cats for decades*."

She flicked and ear and listlessly watched as a budding sapling

began to grow at her paws. "*Hearing that she-cats are treated as equals or witnessing such treatment is like culture shock to the bigoted toms in our clan*."

"*Bigoted?*" Hailkit blinked curiously. "*It's a fancy-paws word used by RoadWalkers to describe a cat that's unreasonably attached to a belief as absurd as BlazeClan's,*" she yawned.

That seemed to be enough to satisfy Hailkit, but Mousekit was still adamant about asking her questions. "*But why are she-cats so frowned upon in BlazeClan?*" She persisted.

"*Mommy said that she-cats give birth and bring life to the clan by providing them with kittens. Doesn't that make us valued since without us the toms wouldn't be here?*" She asked.

"*Because most of the toms in BlazeClan think that's all we she-cats are good for,*" came a voice nearby. The three cats immediately turned to see Lichenfrost heading over with elegant strides.

Lichenfrost flicked her tail as she sat down beside Goslingpaw, her golden brown fur rippling in the light breeze that blew in their direction.

"*They think she-cats are not physically capable of being strong, confident fighters and thus put us down*." Her eyes flickered slightly and a faraway look was clear on her face.

"*Anyway, that's not important. You both go back to your mother, let the Littlepaw rest,*" she added sharply, eyes clearing as she flicked her tail. Mousekit looked like she was about to protest, but the former heiress narrowed her eyes and hissed at the two kits.

Mousekit pouted, but obeyed and she and her brother trotted away, little stubby tails held high in the air. "*Kits*," sighed Lichenfrost. "*Always so inquisitive about everything*."

Her piercing gaze turned to stare at Goslingpaw, who flinched. "*So, you're now Azurestar's foster child, eh?*" She asked flatly. The cream and brown Littlepaw looked up at the taller she-cat in a mix of confusion and awkwardness.

"*I.. I guess?*" The gold-brown she-cat twitched a curled ear and yawned. "*Ah. Blazeclaw must be happy his daughter is being treated right in at least some way*."

She lashed her tail, before adding. "*We're leaving tomorrow*." "*What?*" Goslingpaw repeated in alarm. "*You heard me. BlazeClan is leaving this RoadWalker land tomorrow to go to the Stormfast Isles.*"

"*So soon?"* She mewed in disbelief. "*Yes*." Lichenfrost licked a paw and grazed it delicately over her ear. "*Xiera says this place is not the place to stay. Lousy hunting and constant danger.*"

Lichenfrost paused for a minute, before she then meowed quietly. "*Look, little titter, I know I owed you this long ago and I hope it's not too late for this but..*"

Goslingpaw glanced up at her in confusion as she paused. "*But?*" She prompted carefully. The golden brown she-cat sighed. "*I'm sorry. It was wrong of me to pick on you just for being lower ranked than me*."

Lichenfrost's eyes had dulled with the stressful days that passed, her once glimmering optics now slightly glassed over and unfocused. "*Losing both my brother and father made me realise how horrible of a cat I've become because of them.*"

She shook her head wearily and sighed. "*I yearned so much for both Beetlescar and Cougarstar's approval and love that I was willing to do anything, even hurt others. In the end I got it, but at the cost of losing respect and potential friendships too*."

Goslingpaw remained silent for a moment, looking at the tall golden brown she-cat as she gazed absently into the fading sky, not willing to lock gazes with the she-cat she once tormented.

"*I know a simple apology cannot take back the pain I've caused but I just wanted to let you know that I'll take full responsibility for my actions. You deserved better, and I wished I had helped you out as a fellow she-cat instead of tormenting you.*"

"*Lichenfrost..*" the cream and brown Littlepaw trailed off as the golden brown she-cat silently got to her paws and quietly treaded

away.

Goslingpaw blinked as she watched her former tormentor vanish from her sight, slinking through the tall grasses and brushing past BlazeClan cats.

Silently, she knew in her heart Lichenfrost meant well when she apologised. She'd seen how much the she-cat had seemed to be mentally beating herself up since her father's death and her younger brother's humiliation and death.

Deep inside, she didn't know whether to forgive her or not. But as she debated silently with herself, a soft breeze ruffled her fur and a familiar scent wafted through her nose.

"*It is best to let go of old grudges, my hatchling*," the gentle voice of her father purred. "*The negative thoughts will weigh you down inside; how will you learn to forgive others in the future?*"

Goslingpaw breathed in deeply. "*Oh, father...*" she mumbled softly, her eyes half lidded. "*If only I could really be as carefree in the heart as you.*"

"*One day, my hatchling. One day.*" And the scent soon faded away, gone with the rest of the dying evening breeze.

# Chapter 10: Halfway There

The morning air gently caressed Goslingpaw's face as she watched the great sun rising from over the horizon, the golden ball of fire shining it's glorious rays upon the ocean and land.

She had been nudged awake an hour prior, and as of now she was seated in one of the empty trucks that another metal beast, or a train, as Xiera called it, was hauling, enjoying the scenery.

Today was the day that BlazeClan left the serene Road Walker town of Sunnyville, and Goslingpaw would've never thought she'd be this reluctant to leave.

Sure, it was a settlement that housed mostly RoadWalkers, of all creatures, and the massive metal beasts ran around on a daily basis which provided a risk to a cat's life, she still found beauty in the clean little town.

As the great mechanical monster soon screeched to a halt, the tall RoadWalker that operated it carefully exited the beast and began the process of gently extracting each cat from the empty trucks.

The BlazeClan cats had grown a little more used to the RoadWalkers, but they still had their guards up when they were around the two-legged creatures, not fully trusting them yet.

Goslingpaw arched her wings back and quickly launched her small build into the air, where she hovered for a while until her foster parents were lifted out the trucks and placed on the hard, grey floor of the place Xiera called the docks.

As soon as every cat was lifted out the trucks and placed on the rails, the RoadWalker returned to the mechanical beast and set off down the rails, rumbling down the line as steam exited its funnel.

After a quick headcount, Azurestar flicked his tail as the two Northern Kingdom cats landed beside him, standing tall and regal.

"*Russet Rush and I are ready to leave*," Splash Sprint meowed briefly as his amber-hazel eyes gazed at the silver leader's own blue ones. "*What about you?*"

"*BlazeClan is ready; I assume every cat gathered here is able to make the journey to Stormfast Isles with you,*" he replied, but before any cat could do anything further, Lichenfrost stepped up.

"*Not all of them*," she meowed, eyes shadowed with uncertainty. "*I'm staying here.*"

There was a stunned silence from every cat gathered around the docks. "*What?*" Thornslash blurted out in shock.

"*I've lost Cougarstar and Beetlescar, and I never really knew who was the she-cat who even gave birth to me. I feel out of place in BlazeClan, and after the sins my kin have committed I feel as if I shouldn't burden this clan with my presence*."

"*Lichenfrost*," Aldertrail murmured as she stepped forward. "*That's not true. BlazeClan needs you*." "*BlazeClan has plenty of strong warriors. I know you all will be safe without me*," she responded.

"*But this is such a different place*," protested Beechwhisker. "*Once we go to the Stormfast Isles, we can all start over, try out a new life once again.*"

"*No*," she sighed, eyes dulled and tired. "*I have had my fill of clan life; I know I will struggle to adapt to a new one.*" She flicked her head upwards and sighed.

"*All my life all I was taught was to sit back and let others do the work. You all saw how I struggled to help with the hunting when we were trapped in the mountains*."

With a pang, Goslingpaw remembered how miserable the former heir had looked when she came back shivering from hunting expeditions in the icy mountains.

It didn't matter that she was trained; she never bothered honing her skills so it had caused her to ultimately suffer in the end.

"*I feel as though I won't be able to contribute anything useful to BlazeClan or the Stormfast Isles. My skills cannot compare to the Claws and the Nettles*," she meowed.

Her eyes locked with Azurestar's. "*Azurestar, I know you should make this journey without me. I'm content living alone in Sunnyville and leading an independent life.*"

Murmurs spread through BlazeClan, before all was silenced when Splash Sprint spoke.

"*This is not a choice any cat would make lightly, splitting from a group that had been their home for moons*," he said, voice calm and gentle.

He calmly flicked his gaze over to the silver leader. "*You should let her follow what her heart desires for, Azurestar. Let her have the freedom she never had*."

Azurestar blinked. Quietly, he made his way to the golden brown she-cat until they were standing face to face. Silently, he rested his head atop Lichenfrost's own.

"*No cat can ever question your loyalty and courage, Lichenfrost. You have proven to us that great things can come from listening to your heart when you helped us get through the difficult times in the mountains*."

His eyes flashed. "*BlazeClan will miss your courage and skill, Lichenfrost. I wish you well. If we are lucky, we may see one another again*."

Lichenfrost leaned into the touch and murmured, "*I hope so. I wish you well on your journey*." She shied away from Azurestar after a short while, then gazed at Goslingpaw as she padded up to the former heir.

Goslingpaw had grown a small bundle of herbs wrapped in a leafy bundle, and gave them to Lichenfrost. "*They will help you with your strength*," she explained as the golden brown she-cat gave her a quizzical look.

"*Oh. Thank you*," she murmured quietly, and bent down to pick up the herb bundle in her jaws. Just then, Xiera leapt down from the

pier nearby and cantered over.

"*Old fisherman arriving with water monster soon. Get ready,*" she ordered briskly. Lichenfrost blinked, then tilted her head to look at Azurestar. "*I wish you the best on your journey*," she murmured. "*And I hope you make it to the end*."

The rest of BlazeClan drifted over to her, brushing heads and tails against her flank as their way of saying goodbye. Even the Starpaws gazed on at the former heir with respect in their eyes.

The only cats who didn't say or do anything were Dovetail and Swanpaw. Goslingpaw gnashed her teeth when she heard her mother whisper, "*That's less competition for you to take the throne now, my dear.*"

Suddenly, Xiera let out a series of loud barks, which startled many cats. The BlazeClan cats watched in awe as a massive monster cut through the waves, gradually coming to a halt at the docks.

Unlike the trains, this beast lacked any wheels and instead had a large moon-shaped base which was hollowed out slightly so there was some sort of barrier around it.

There was a small portion which was sheltered, and there was a contraption sticking out under the shelter which was presumed to be used to propel the beast.

There was only one RoadWalker inside the water monster. It was tall, with silver grey hair atop its head, and it had kindly green eyes that glimmered gently like leaves covered with sparkling dew under the morning sun.

The RoadWalker then took a wooden plank from inside the water monster, and set it between the beast and the docks so the cats could easily climb aboard the watercraft.

Xiera ignored it; she swiftly bounded across and leapt onto the boat with ease. Though they were hesitant at first, the BlazeClan cats slowly began to make their way up to the water monster.

As Goslingpaw was about to go, she felt a hard shove to her back

and almost tumbled into the water. Thankfully Elmriver was nearby, and had snatched her up by her scruff before she could actually topple in.

Turning her head, she narrowed her eyes when she saw both Dovetail and her sister behind her. Dovetail merely scoffed, hatred pooling in her eyes while Swanpaw refused to make any sort of eye contact at all.

Goslingpaw scowled and hurriedly scampered aboard and took her place between Aldertrail and Azurestar. When the last of BlazeClan had finally climbed atop the monster, the RoadWalker removed the plank and went to start up the beast.

Russet Rush gazed at Lichenfrost, who was quietly waving her tail. "*Bruce will escort you to a safe place for you to rest*," he called out, just as a sandy gold tom with dark ginger swirls on his pelt approached.

When the water monster jolted to life and began to slowly cruise away from the docks, Goslingpaw watched as both Bruce and Lichenfrost waved their tails at the departing water monster in farewell.

Silently, she wondered if any more of BlazeClan would not make it to see their new home as their forms grew smaller and smaller, until they were just two golden dots in the rising light of the sun.

# Chapter 11: Under The Sea

As the water beast, or boat, as Xiera now began to call it, began cruising through the sea, it was also then the sun had reached the peak in the sky, shining its radiant beams down and casting its glow on the water.

Usually back at home, the forest was covered by the tall canopy of trees and their leaves, usually blocking out the sun, so Goslingpaw was used to seeing water shrouded in shadows.

Now she was dazzled by the shimmering light that sparkled through the ocean waves, creating an illusion of diamonds sparkling under the glory of those deep blue tides.

The other BlazeClan cats were in sheer awe too. It was their first time seeing the ocean, and they had never seen anything more glorious than the crashing tides of the sea.

"*Look! Down there! What's that?*" Stonepaw suddenly began meowing in excitement. Most of the clan cats immediately crowded over to see what he had spotted.

It was a sea creature with a dorsal fin on its back, sleek streamlined body keeping pace with the boat as the sun shine down on its leathery grey skin. "*There's a hole on its head*," Cinderpaw whispered.

"*It's a dolphin,*" Splash Sprint chuckled, amused at how in awe the BlazeClan cats were upon seeing the beautiful sea creature. "*And there's more of them. Look!*"

To her amazement, there were more of those pretty dolphins nearby, swimming close to the surface of the water and sometimes even sticking their dorsal fins through.

"*That hole on their heads is a breathing hole. Dolphins aren't fish, they need to come to the surface to get air,*" Splash Sprint explained as his eyes watched the cats to make sure they didn't fall over into the

ocean water.

"*I wanna see! I wanna see!*" The squeaky voices of the kits clamouring to see the ocean wonders was ignored by most of BlazeClan, but soon made their way to Splash Sprint's ears.

Turning to the kittens, who were still guarded by Cottonsong, he made his way over and murmured, "*May I?*" She blinked, stunned, before mumbling, "*As long as they're kept safe*."

With that, Splash Sprint carefully bent down, gesturing for the kits to climb on his back. Once all of them had climbed onto his back, he mewed, "*Now, hold on tight, little hatchlings. We wouldn't want you to fall in the water, would we?*"

The kits all squeaked out a little, "*Nope!*" as their response, and with a smile, Splash Sprint suddenly launched himself into the air and the kits all squealed with surprise and excitement.

Cottonsong hurried over to the rails of the boat where Russet Rush was, and heaved a sigh of relief when she saw that her kits were all safe and sound, clinging onto Splash Sprint's fur as he began soaring above the water.

"*Woahhhh!*" The kits all gasped in awe as they looked at the dolphins swimming near them, and Splash Sprint spread his wings out wider so they could reach over and try to touch them without falling in.

Mousekit daringly poked a paw down experimentally, and much to her delight, a dolphin actually brushed up against her paw, making soft chittering noises.

"*I touched one! I touched one!*" She cheered with excitement and joy. Splash Sprint laughed as her brothers made noises of excitement and awe at their sister's feat.

Swiftly cocking his head over, he yelled over, "*Goslingpaw, come down here and ride the wind with me!*" Goslingpaw blinked in shock. "*H-huh? Me?*"

"*Goslingpaw! Come fly with us!*" Cheered Hailkit and Icekit with

excitement. "*Yeah! Come on and fly with us!*" Squeaked Ripplekit and Mousekit.

Glancing over at her foster parents for permission, she smiled when Aldertrail licked her forehead and murmured, "*Be safe*," while Azurestar smiled and nodded.

Quickly scrambling out onto the ledge of the water monster, she arched her wings back and launched herself into the air, slashing her wings down and propelling herself upwards.

She swooped down so she was level with Splash Sprint, and he gave her a warm smile. "*Feel the wind through your feathers, little hatchling?*" He called out.

Indeed, she did. The cool breeze riffled through her glossy gold-and-green feathers, and the sun's beams only further reflected their glory, shining down on them and showing off her wings fantastically.

Moments later a sharp gust of wind shot past her head and she glanced up in surprise only to see the russet-pelted Pyro soaring into the great blue sky, russet wings reflected by the sun.

"*And there goes Russet Rush showing off again,*" Splash Sprint chuckled. He got a small shock as Goslingpaw suddenly shot up after him, before he chuckled as he watched the two race each other higher above.

"*Cryptids will always be cryptids,"* he chuckled. *"In the end there's always an inner kit in one of us*." His amber-hazel eyes gazed upwards affectionately.

"*She really is your daughter indeed, my lord Rippling Leaf. I see your spirit in her.*"

# Chapter 12: Take The Plunge

"*Little hatchling.*"

Goslingpaw squirmed lightly in her sleep and muttered, "*Five more minutes, Aldertrail.*"

"*That's not my- oh, for Star's sake, Goslingpaw!*"

That was certainly not Aldertrail.

Sleepily, she opened her eyes only to see Russet Rush standing there, blue eyes staring right back at her humorously as he smiled playfully down at her.

"*Good light, little wren. Sleep well?*" He asked with a smile. "*Russet Rush?*" She croaked, before cringing at how she sounded like she just swallowed a dust-ridden trout head-first, bones and all.

"*In the flesh, bones and fur, who else would I be?*" he meowed proudly. Goslingpaw yawned and glanced around. Her fellow clan-mates were all still asleep in small groups, their flanks rising and falling rhythmically with their breathing.

Slowly, she eased herself out from under her foster mother's tail, being careful not to wake Aldertrail or Azurestar up as both were sleeping next to her, tails coiled protectively.

Arching her back into a stretch, she was only faintly aware of Xiera laying next to the RoadWalker who was sleeping on a small contraption called a chair, her pale eyes half-lidded as she watched over the BlazeClan cats like they were a herd of sheep.

Splash Sprint landed next to Russet Rush shortly after, and he smiled down at her kindly. "*Come on, little wren. We're taking you fishing.*" This got the cream and brown she-cat's attention quickly.

"*Fishing?*" She repeated in surprise. "*Yes, we must catch some prey for your clan, mustn't we?*" Chuckled the blue-grey tom with a look of

amusement on his face. "*Those bellies won't feed themselves*."

"*But doesn't this boat have mice skittering around the place? Can't we catch those?*" She queried. "*Nope. The fisherman keeps his water monster neat and tidy. No rats or mice to catch*," Russet Rush replied.

"*Oh*." Russet Rush nosed her head gently and chuckled. "*Now come on. The sun won't rise for a good hour or so, let move before it does and sends the fish fleeing to the cooler depths,*" he meowed.

Without waiting, he turned and swiftly shot into the air, Splash Sprint following. Glancing back for a moment, Goslingpaw blinked at her slumbering foster parents before taking off to join the two winged toms.

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The cool night air bathed her face and brought great comfort to her as she flew beside the two older toms. She had shaken off any remaining grogginess by now, and was enjoying the flight greatly.

Ahead, Russet Rush was humming an ancient song to himself, his voice being surprisingly lovely like the song of magpies. Splash Sprint was navigating through the dark, his eyes scanning the waters below.

"*We're here,*" he finally announced after a long while. "*Do you see those silver flashes under the water?*"

Goslingpaw glanced down, and could catch glimpses of silver darting about in one direction under the waves.

"*What are they?*" She whispered. "*Needlefish. Rather ugly little things, but they're moderately healthy though they taste absolutely revolting to me*," Russet Rush replied.

"*We also crush their bones to a powder which makes an ancient medicine the Latros used in war decades ago when it's combined with some special herbs*," Splash Sprint added.

Goslingpaw nodded her head in understanding. "*So how do we catch them?*" She asked. "*Simple. You and I will dive under water and break the school from within, and snag as many fish as you can in your jaws*,"

Splash Sprint began.

*"We will also try driving some to the absolute top of the water surface, and possible get them to leap out as well, so Russet Rush can swoop down and catch them."*

Much to her surprise Russet Rush didn't complain about the plan, though he did look a bit disgusted. Nodding at what Splash Sprint had said, he smiled at her before swiftly diving downwards with his wings snapped shut.

Goslingpaw swiftly followed suit, and as her body hit the water she had to stop herself from gasping at the sudden chill of the ocean water.

Once her eyes were accustomed to the underwater feeling, she spotted Splash Sprint hurtling at breakneck speed into the giant school of fish, shattering the peaceful waters and sending fish darting about in all directions.

Quickly, she followed suit, swimming upwards and chasing after a small pod of needlefish. Opening her jaws, she initially cringed at the salty taste of ocean water, but nonetheless she surged forth and managed to capture about five writing fishes.

Her teeth sank into the oily, slimy bodies of the writing fishes, and she watched as Splash Sprint shot past, snagging hold of about eight in his strong jaws.

Together, both cryptids then began herding the fish upwards, where the visible red shape of Russet Rush hovered, waiting. With a swift whisk of his tail, Splash Sprint sent a group of them leaping out the water.

They were quickly snatched up by the russet tom, who twisted elegantly so his jaws could capture the writing fish before they all plopped back into the salty ocean water.

No words were said; Splash Sprint's head broke through the surface of the water as did Goslingpaw's and he gave a soundless nod of approval before he rose from the seawater, powerful wings beating

to lift his soaked form up.

Goslingpaw followed suit, saltwater streaming off her fur as she lifted herself from the water into the air. Russet Rush gave a simple nod, and started flying back.

Soon, the three cats were flying back to the water monster as the sun began to peek over the horizon, and the fiery pinks, reds and oranges wove their way into the sky.

———

Relief surged into her bones once she saw the water monster again. Goslingpaw could see Aldertrail frantically pacing about, while Azurestar seemed to be locked in an argument with Dovetail over something.

She frowned. Trust her birth mother to try and ruin her foster parents' lives. Nevertheless, the young Littlepaw plastered on a smile as she and the two Northern toms landed on the water monster and dropped their catches to the floor.

The moment she appeared, Aldertrail had bolted up to her and immediately whisked her into her warm embrace. "*Oh, my hatchling! You're safe!*" She gasped.

"*M-mom-! I'm soaked!*" Goslingpaw gasped in shock. Had she really been gone that long? "*It doesn't matter, you're safe. That's all I needed to know*," Aldertrail meowed softly.

"*Apologies, ma'am. We took her out fishing,*" Splash Sprint apologised. "*See?! I told you she hasn't abandoned the clan! Stop spewing absolute nonsense out of that filthy maw of yours!*" Azurestar bellowed angrily at Dovetail.

Goslingpaw felt her blood run cold. *She was saying I abandoned the clan?* She tensed up slightly. Of course, leave it to Dovetail to slander her reputation while she was trying to do good for the clan.

Thankfully Russet Rush snapped, "*Alright, enough arguing. We caught fish, take it or leave it. Tastes revolting but it's the only thing we'll eat out here for a while.*"

"*Not only thing,*" Xiera panted as she helped the RoadWalker pull a net in the water onto the water monster. Immediately, the net flopped onto the ground, with a couple of fish and another strange sea animal inside.

The RoadWalker opened the net and pulled out all the fish before pushing them towards the cats, keeping one large one for himself while Xiera tugged the weird creature off the net and flung it down.

BlazeClan stared uncertainly at the fish. Only Slatepaw and Stonepaw bounded forth eagerly, and began to snack on two of the needlefish Goslingpaw caught.

"*What's the matter?*" Russet Rush huffed, looking at the clan. "*We.. don't eat fish,*" Bearclaw explained uncertainly. "*Well, I hate fish, but you don't see me complaining about eating it, do you?*" Scoffed the russet tom.

"*I suppose it won't hurt to try*," Azurestar murmured, and one by one the BlazeClan cats began picking up the fish to sample and eat, still rather cautious.

"*Now, tell me,*" Azurestar added , his eyes still staring with absolute disbelief at the catches of the hunt. "*How do you eat something like that?*"

Goslingpaw followed his gaze to see that he was looking down on the weird, reddish, eight-legged creature that Xiera had flung up from the net.

"*Where to even begin?*" Gustfang sighed. "*Eight legs. Absurd*," Aldertrail said. "*That thing should trade in four of them for a pair of wings*."

"*It's moving*," gagged Lilynose as she backed away. "*And it looks so.. slimy,*" Elmriver scowled, glaring at the revolting creature in pure disdain.

"*It's an octopus*," Splash Sprint muttered. "*Best not to eat it; those tentacles have suckers that can latch onto your throat and choke you if you try eating it*."

The sigil on Splash Sprint shoulder suddenly began glowing a pale shade of blue, and water twisted up from the sea, forming a small globe which ensnared the octopus within before placing it back in the ocean.

"*Wow*," murmured Aldertrail as she gazed at the tom twisting the water to his command. The blue-grey tom chuckled humorously. "*We going to eat, or watch me use my magic?*" He teased gently.

"*Better eat quick*," Xiera called out from her place near the RoadWalker where she was gnawing at another fish. "*Fish go bad quickly. Fly larvae not good to swallow, make you sick.*"

With that, BlazeClan began to feast.

# Chapter 13: Telling Tales

"*My breath is going to smell for moons*," moaned Lionpaw as he belched. Honeypaw and Streampaw gagged, and Cootpaw muttered sourly, "*Maybe if you didn't eat more than you train it wouldn't be that way.*"

"*The fish was disgusting anyway*," Lionpaw snorted. "*What do you mean?! You tried to take all our fish and scarfed down any extras left!*" Snapped Hazelpaw.

Goslingpaw rolled her eyes as the duo began to banter, and started to groom herself carefully, parting her fur with her tongue to get to any bits of fish that may have stuck there.

From the corner of her eye, she watched as Splash Sprint and Russet Rush carefully discarded most of the bones back into the sea before bundling the remaining ones into a piece of cloth to give the Latros.

Suddenly, Mousekit called out, "*Russet Rush, is the Tribe of the Blooming Valley the only tribe in the Northern Kingdoms?*"

"*Of course not!*" Russet Rush gave a laugh. "*You already know there's the Tribe of The Blooming Valley, but we also border with the Kin Of The Restless Veil, the Golden Rose Cult and the Guild of Freedom*."

By now, a lot of the apprentices has gathered around the russet tom to hear his stories, and most of the BlazeClan cats were listening with interest.

"*Are you trying to scare the young cats with the tale of the Phantom Soul Snatcher again?*" Splash Sprint let out a purr of amusement as his mate affectionately butted heads with him. Russet Rush's neck fur spiked up slightly and in a flustered manner, he replied, "*No I'm not! That was so long ago!*"

Splash Sprint laughed and gracefully hopped onto the crate his mate was perched on, then after giving his red-furred mate a lick to

the ear he slumped down into a comfortable lying down position.

"*Just making sure you don't scare them into the sea like you did to poor Fern and Elm Weaver last moon*," he joked with a playful smile. Depthpaw tilted his head in confusion. "*Phantom Soul Snatcher?*"

The grey water manipulator chuckled and responded, "*Just a silly old horror tale Rus spun up to frighten the tribe apprentices for sneaking out of camp at night."*

The blue gray tom snuck a glance at his embarrassed mate and chuckled, "*Ended up frightening two tribemates, one a senior warrior and the other a young apprentice so badly, they got stuck in the muddy part of the river*."

He paused and laughed before adding, "*This dolt got frightened when he couldn't find them after making scary sounds and whistling to scare them, and actually started to believe his nonsensical story was true."*

He couldn't help but laugh as he added, "*Ran back to camp screaming in the funniest manner when he then heard Sonata from the Kin Of The Restless Veil whistling for backup*."

Russet groaned in embarrassment and covered his head with his wings. "*Sonata? Who's that supposed to be?*" Chanterellestreak asked.

"*A friend from the tribe that resides next to us. We were lucky she was out on a solo moonlight patrol and saw them in time to whistle for help. Russet ended up confined to camp for two weeks*," chuckled Splash Sprint.

Russet Rush groaned and begged, "*Please, Splash, I thought we said no more bringing that up*."

The grey-pelted tom laughed and coiled their tails together and replied, "*Alright, love. Tell them about whatever you were talking about earlier*."

Russet shuffled his wings down and lay next to his mate before he resumed with his earlier story about the Valley cats of the Northern Kingdoms. "*Anyway, as I was saying, we border with three more groups in the valley*."

"*Living diagonally across from us is the Guild Of Freedom. They are led by their four Alphas, or leaders, and they're the group which keeps to the sky. They're our meditators, our peacekeepers*." Lionpaw suddenly asked, "*Keep to the sky?*"

Splash Sprint flicked his tail and answered, "*They sleep on the tallest trees located within their territory in the valley, and no other cats aside from them can fly that quickly through the trees situated all around*."

"*I bet I could*," muttered Russet Rush, and the grey tom rolled his eyes and replied, "*Don't make me laugh. Wasn't it you that got stuck in the vines the last time we had a treetop swinging race?*"

Before the red-furred tom could splutter out an answer, Splash Sprint continued, "*They have some sort of tree-top village, and they nest in hollows or in nests woven from vines and leaves."*

At this, his eyes clouded with memory. "*I've been to their camp before; the trees are so close to each other that all of their branches touch.*"

"*So how do they hunt?*" Stagpounce questioned. "*It's difficult to catch ground prey with so many roots and branches to trip over, is it not?*"

Russet Rush gave a shrug and answered, "*They lure birds of prey over to their grounds by chasing whatever ground prey out of their stinking burrows and kill them in midair after the bird gets the prey. Win-win, if you ask me.*"

"*They also hunt seabirds and small reptiles like lizards to eat, but birds are their primary prey*," He added, before scrunching up his nose. "*Though for the love of me I can't understand what's so good about lizards to eat. Too dry and no meat!*"

Splash Sprint rolled his eyes upwards in amusement and meowed, "*They may be the most peaceful out of all of us, but they have strength in numbers and the highest level of aerial agility in case of an attack*."

He twitched an ear. "*Don't underestimate their loyalty. One whistle from an injured tribemate is all it takes for the entire clan to go rising into the air like a swarm of killer hornets*."

Russet Rush then added, "*There's also no escaping them when they're in the air, too. They have the largest wingspans out of us all and have a lot of stamina*."

"*From experience, the Guild will gladly chase you across the sea if they have to without stopping at all. The whole lot of them are also incredibly persistent and stubborn, they won't go down without a fight*."

Goslingpaw couldn't help the shiver that ran down her spine as she envisioned cats pursuing her across the sea for her blood.

It was horrifying to imagine her small and weaker wings beating frantically as a whole giant swarm of winged cats went after her with murderous intent.

"*The Guild also harnesses plant magic to their use even if not all of them have that ability like Phytos*," here Splash Sprint paused and gestured to Goslingpaw.

"*They're able to create whole new beings with their powers. I've been in a fight with them once, and I witnessed a reckless and foolhardy tribemate of mine, Dash Flame, get himself killed by a massive plant that has jaws like a lion*."

"*It's called a flytrap, old iron*," murmured Russet Rush softly as he affectionately brushed his cheek against his mate's.

Splash Sprint snorted and returned the affectionate gesture, before then turning back to the BlazeClan cats to continue his mate's story.

"*Then there's the Kin Of The Restless Veil. They are very modern and keep up with RoadWalker lifestyles. They also stay by the coast of the valleys and nest in holes on the huge rocky wall that shadows the sea*."

"*Holes?!*" Cootpaw interrupted in disbelief. Russet Rush fired the apprentice a glare of annoyance and bared his teeth.

Cootpaw flinched noticeably when he saw flames and sparks appear by the russet tom's jaws and sat back down.

"*You heard me right. Their beachside camp is situated by large stone crags and rocky peaks, giving them access to the sandy grounds below.*

*They also have the ruins of an ancient human settlement there, and that thing is crawling with rats*."

"*The Kin rule the waters. They're the best at navigating the skies and oceans through any weather as they house Keraunos, or storm bringers, within their ranks."*

*"Similarly to the Guild, they work in groups and are deathly loyal to each other. You hurt a member in one of their troops, the whole tribe will come for your blood*."

"*I have a question,*" Crowcall meowed. "*I heard that only siblings can rule the Kin Of The Restless Veil. Is that true?*"

"*Very. Like the Tribe, only two pairs of siblings each can rule the Hearts. There aren't other exceptions made,*" Russet Rush yawned. "*And now we move on to the most dangerous tribe of all, the Golden Rose Cult."*

*"I thought your tribe was the most dangerous?"* Foxfang asked, puzzled. "*We are the strongest battle-wise. The Cult is the strongest element-wise*," the russet tom answered.

"*The Cult is overrun by she-cats, how strong can it possibly be?*" Snorted Thrushpounce. This was met with a searing glare from the two valley cats, and the tom shut up really fast.

"*They are deathly unpredictable, that's for sure,"* Splash Sprint replied. *"The cats there are like a hive mind. They obey only their leader's orders without fail."*

*"The cult also is the only tribe that works with dark magic in the valley. They live with it. The cats within the Golden Rose Cult have supernatural powers that were thought to have only existed in the old tales of long ago."*

Murmurs of awe rippled through the clan cats. "*So this makes them invincible then?*" Rockpaw asked. "*Not necessarily, but if you fight in their territory consider yourself lost*," Russet Rush answered.

"*The Golden Rose Cult is hidden far away from the other tribes, and their caverns turn into tunnels that form a labyrinth of mazes, making invasions hard on both ends as their colonies band together and make*

*strong fighters*."

"*Woahhhh*," came the amazed replies from the apprentices. Suddenly, Icekit piped up, "*What about the cryptids' elements? Can you tell us about those?*"

The two glanced at each other, before chuckling. "*Why not? A drink of water is very much needed first though*."

# Chapter 14: Elements of The North

**TW: mention of su!c!de**

*"Use your cool water powers again!"* Squeaked Hailkit. *"We wanna see!"*

"*Hm. Well I can't disappoint, can I?*" Chuckled Splash Sprint. The sigil on his shoulder began to glow again, and he swiftly drew streams of water out from his claws.

With graceful motions, he twisted his claws and the water that streamed out gradually twisted itself into a small globe that hovered before him and the BlazeClan cats.

"*You all can take a drink if you would like to, though it is much recommended you do,*" he meowed. "*It's the only thing we'll have on this water monster.*"

Quickly, the BlazeClan cats treaded forth and began cautiously lapping at the liquid sphere, and much to their surprise it never seemed to shrink no matter how much they drank.

Cottonsong had gently lifted up each of her kits one by one so they could get their fill of water, and once they had finished she took her turn to get a drink.

Goslingpaw herself gingerly lapped at the floating ball of water. It was cool and refreshing, and much to her relief it cooled her down considerably.

Once all the BlazeClan cats had finished Splash Sprint and Russet Rush took their drinks before Splash Sprint flicked his claws and the water sphere evaporated into thin air.

"*Now, elements. The four basic elements are Hydro, Pyro, Phyto and*

*Atmo, or simply water, fire, plants and air,*" Splash Sprint began.

"*Pyros are fire-benders, and they can easily transform a sizzling, dying spark to a raging inferno within minutes. A Pyro born under a solar eclipse is a Solar; they are even more powerful and they harvest their magic directly from the sun*."

The BlazeClan cats gaped in awe before sneaking looks at Russet Rush, who puffed up his chest with pride.

"*Hydros are water-manipulators. You've already seen what I can do; but there are two more variations of a Hydro, a Cryo and a Hemo*."

"*What's the difference?*" Gustfang asked. "*Cryos can freeze any liquid and utilise it as weaponry while Hemos can only control vital fluids like blood,*" Splash Sprint answered.

"*Phytos such as your future queen here,*" he paused and gestured to Goslingpaw, who shrank back in embarrassment. "*Are plant manipulators. Their abilities aren't as powerful as a Geo's, or earth manipulators, but they are capable of remarkable things*."

"*Atmos can change wind flow which comes handy in hunting so the prey won't scent you. They can change a simple breeze into a full-blown typhoon with a simple snap of their claws, and this ability boosts flight*."

"*Now, apprentices,*" he smiled. "*Can you guess which is the rarest element of all? And you older cats shut your jaws*." Immediately a chorus of answers sounded out from the group.

*"Crystallos!"*
*"Khaskos?"*
*"No, it's Oneiro! Or is it Apeiro..."*
*"It's Aether, stupid!"*
*"Is it Latro?"*

"*Pause! Who said Latro?*" Russet Rush asked, raising his tail. *"I did!"* Mewed Softpaw. "*Well, someone knows her legends well!*" Laughed the russet Pyro.

*"Indeed, cryptids with pure Latro magic running through their veins are thought to have died out entirely! They're rumoured to be able to heal*

*any injury with a single touch, but the last pure Latro is said to have died decades ago so we can't prove it."*

*"Can't they just get the other healers with Latro blood to mate and try getting a kit with pure Latro blood?"* Streampaw asked curiously.

"*Good question! We have tried, but so far no success,*" answered Russet Rush. "*Moving on! We have Khaskos, who are better known as shapeshifters. They can shift their appearance to match the visual appearance of any cat they think of.*"

"*That's a lie!*" Scoffed Lionpaw. "*No cat can do that!*" "*Little one, when you go to the Northern Kingdoms even the impossible can come true*," chuckled Splash Sprint.

"*Next to Khaskos are Audios and Toxos. Audios are like sirens; they can raise their voices to unthinkable levels and even sing others to death. Toxos have fangs of a snake. They have venom in their teeth that can kill a cat with no problem*."

"*Is there any herbal cure for the poison?*" Berrytrail asked worriedly. "*Unfortunately, a Toxo's bite can't be cured with herbs. The only thing healers can do is to treat the bite and make the suffering less painful*."

"*Then what happens if a cryptid gets bitten? Do they just die?*" Vinespring asked nervously. "*Depends on the amount. They're usually in for a lifetime of suffering. I've seen Toxo victims before; they always beg to be put out of their misery after a week*."

Splash Sprint flicked an ear. "*The only cure is to find a cryptid whose Toxo sigil glows the same colour as the one who inflicted the bite. This way the poison counteracts the one already in the bloodstream.*"

"*Interesting,*" murmured Elmriver. "*We also have Cosmos, who read the stars and interpret omens and prophecies. They are talented in astrology and can predict star cycles with ease, and Prisms who form indestructible barriers out of tides and air.*"

"*Then we have Tephros and Psammos, ash and sand manipulators respectively. They manipulate these two certain elements and their most famous trick is to suddenly fill an enemy's lungs with them, killing*

*effectively*."

A lot of the Claws winced and shrunk back at this statement, and Goslingpaw couldn't help the hint of smugness that crept on her face at their reactions.

"*There's also Keraunos, who bring about thunderstorms and thick cloud cover in war, Crystallos who manipulate and grow crystal splinters out of stone, Scotos who control the dark, Xylos who control wood dead or alive and Dracos who can control other animals*."

"*Other animals?*" Gawked Cootpaw. "*You heard me. They can hypnotise other animals into doing their bidding. Only cryptids are immune,*" Russet Rush meowed.

"*Now on to the deadliest elements of all,*" he added. "*So you all better listen. If you face one of these elements in battle you best pray they let you off easy*."

Many of the cats gulped nervously and strained their ears in to listen to the russet tom's words.

"*First of we have the Chronos. They are time warpers; they can easily reverse and fast forward time to stop incidents from happening or change a cat's future for better or worse. They can bend time to their will, and no one will know that they have done so.*"

Hazelpaw nervously twitched her tail. "*So, if a Chrono was to traverse time and reverse it now, we wouldn't be aware?*" "*No. Unless you are specially trained, no cryptid will ever know,*" Russet Rush answered.

"*Next are the Oneiros and the Apeiros. They can turn your dreams to nightmares. Oneiros can do a nifty little trick we like to call dreamstalking.*" He flicked his head to Goslingpaw.

"*That's how Tarragon was able to communicate with you in the mountains*." Goslingpaw gasped. "*How did..*" "*A valley cat never reveals their secrets*," Russet Rush answered with a cheeky smirk, prompting an eye-roll from his mate.

"*Moving on! Apeiros create false realities as a form of torture. They will*

*strike after their victims are knocked out and fully unconscious, and once a victim is trapped in the false reality they can never wake up to escape it again.*"

He sharply flicked an ear and his blue eyes narrowed. "*The final dangerous element is Lethe. Lethes have the ability to absorb memories from any living creature and use it to their advantage.*"

Splash Sprint sighed, his eyes clouding over slightly with grief. "*The worst part is the victim knows it's happening but there's nothing they can do to stop their memories from being stolen. I had a tribemate who had this happen to her in a battle*."

He shifted quietly and his ears drooped. The tribemate must've been a dear friend of his, Goslingpaw supposed. "*She lost all her memories of her parents and she was driven to such insanity that she.. poisoned herself..*"

Russet Rush quietly put a wing around his mate and noses his head gently while the BlazeClan cats bowed their heads in a form of respect and mourning.

No matter how bad their culture had been, a death was still something to mourn over, and this particular loss of a cat they barely knew was tragic in so many ways.

He swallowed and sighed. "*Apologies, war memories are a weak point of mine. Please excuse me*," he meowed quietly as he leapt off the small mound and quietly treaded off.

Russet Rush silently followed, and the rest of BlazeClan was left to settle down quietly, thinking about what they had learned today.

# Chapter 15: The Four Beasts

Day had faded into night in what seemed like mere minutes. The inky darkness spread its cover across the dying gold of the dusky sky and the sun was swallowed by the sea.

Most of the older cats had already drifted off to sleep, leaving some of the apprentices, the kits and Cottonsong awake.

"*Please, my dears, go to sleep*," the long-suffering queen sighed, her groggy eyes half-lidded as she gazed at her four squirming bundles.

"*But maaaahm, we're nooot tired*," whined Mousekit and Icekit, and Hailkit giggled along while Ripplekit covered his ears with his paws to block out the noise his siblings were making.

"*Kits, troubling your mother now?*" A soft flurry of wingbeats sounded out, and Russet Rush landed before the tired queen and her kits.

Goslingpaw turned to see where Splash Sprint was at, and a small smile crept onto her face when she saw him nestled into Xiera's white and black fur, sleeping soundly with the dog.

"*We're not tired*," complained Mousekit. "*Ah. Why not I sing all you little wide-eyes a song to soothe your ears and let you sleep?*" He purred gently.

"*We're not babies,*" mumbled Rockpaw. "*We don't need nursery rhymes*." But his grumbling was drowned out by the excited squeaks of the kits who clamoured for a song.

The beautiful russet tom chuckled and cleared his throat before he began to sing in a soft and gentle voice that was lilting and lovely as ever, drawing in all of BlazeClan's younger cats who were still awake to hear his words.

"*In the realm where creation goes to die,*
*The four beasts escaped their cage with a mighty cry.*

*The four beasts went to rampage across the earth,*
*Control, Jealousy, Rage, and Rebirth.*

*For ten days they raged against their gilded cage,*
*And for ten nights the warrior fought against the war they waged.*

*The earth shook and our oceans burned,*
*As he fought for weeks, his back unturned.*

*He overcame the four beasts and escaped unhurt,*
*And sealed these monsters all around Earth.*

*Control was caged in the east,*
*Where she was sealed within the petals, unable to feast.*

*Jealousy was sent to the bottom of the sea,*
*Part of a forgotten legacy.*

*Rage was trapped in his strongest cage,*
*Seething with wrath and counting his days*

*And Rebirth was forced deep into the Earth,*
*Endlessly watching the world in reverse.*

*The hero fell to earth with a sigh,*
*And that night the stars shine twice as bright.*"

By then, his lilting voice had helped make most of the apprentices fall asleep, and Mousekit's protests grew softer until she gradually dozed off with her brothers.

Cottonsong cast the older tom a grateful smile, before resting her head on her white paws and closed her pale green eyes, her flank rising and falling rhythmically with her breathing.

Goslingpaw rolled over onto her side as she watched those calming blue eyes swivel to her before the russet tom approached her with an amused smile.

"*Someone's not asleep yet, I see,*" he chuckled, voice playful and amused. Goslingpaw cast an equally cheeky smile up at him and replied, "*Your singing was lovely.*"

"*Why, thank you. My parents used to say we had Audio blood in our family somewhere; now I can say for sure it's true,*" he hummed, pride flickering in his eyes.

Goslingpaw giggled sleepily before she felt a tail coil around her own. Russet Rush chuckled before saying, "*Goodnight little wren, I'll see you when the sun rises*."

With that, the russet tom trotted over to where his mate was and curled up with him. Goslingpaw carefully shifted so she could see whose tail was on hers.

She smiled when Depthpaw's sweet face came into view and let out a small chuckle. His eyes opened slightly and he smiled shyly at her.

"*Just making sure you're still here,*" he murmured. She smiled and nosed his cheek gently. "*I will be here as long as I have to be, you silly dolt,*" she purred.

He smiled and closed his eyes once more, and shortly after the young she-cat followed him, as the stars twinkled bright above in the inky night sky.

# Chapter 16: Tale of Love

The sun had risen to a new day, and the BlazeClan cats were off in groups, chattering with one another. Goslingpaw sat a safe distance away from Russet Rush and his group of warriors where he was concocting a grand tale of a battle.

Gradually, her eyes wandered over to the end of the water monster where Splash Sprint was perched by the steps that led into the beast.

The RoadWalker had opened the doors that blocked the cats from wandering down the steps at night, and now he was settled there, staring absentmindedly at the beauty of the sea.

Slowly, she slunk towards him and settled down beside the blue-grey tom. "*Oh, greetings little wren*," Splash Sprint mewed with a kind smile. "*Anything I can do for you?*"

Goslingpaw blinked. She wanted to take his mind off the possibly traumatic memory he had recalled yesterday, so she asked the first question she thought of.

"*How did you and Russet Rush fall in love?*"

The smoky grey tom stared at the young heiress, his eyes wide with surprise. "*Your highness, are you really asking... how we became mates?*" Splash Sprint asked, expression quizzical. The heiress nodded, and held her excited gaze.

"*Yeah! How'd you confess? How'd you get together? Did some cats in your tribe expect you both to become a couple?*" Gosling asked excitedly, her eyes flickering with pure excitement and curiosity.

Splash Sprint blinked, before smiling warmly at the young princess. This had been a question asked many times, and he was happy to answer it.

"*Sure, I suppose. To answer your questions, Rus was actually the one who confessed first. And we were the most unexpected couple indeed for the tribe.*" The grey tom smiled fondly at the memory.

"*How were you two unexpected? You both go so well together!*" Goslingpaw meowed, eyes wide in surprise.

The older Hydro laughed warmly, a delicate sound that made her heart feel like it was made of sunshine. She could see why most would fall for the charming tribe cat.

"*Well, he disliked me a lot at first. I was the oldest kit by just a couple of minutes in the nursery at the time, you see. Storm Breeze and Leaf Wing were born respectively just a few days after I was, and Russet was born about a moon after.*

*Rus greatly looked up to Storm at the time because of his confidence and his build, and they often looked down on me because I wasn't as daring as them.*

*Russet and Storm both often called me names and teased me when we were younger. Leaf never joined in, but he didn't do anything to stop it either.*

*I don't blame him; I hadn't a clue of how to get them to stop their antics myself. I was a pushover, and often agreed to help them to do things only to be called unreliable and old.*"

The beautiful tomcat paused and flicked his tail, and Goslingpaw leaned forward, intrigued by his tale.

"*They were both little pains in my tail back then, those two. I would swear to never help them again and each time I still would. They were more self-absorbed than they are now, and often flaunted themselves and tried to show off before me.*

*When we became trainees things didn't get better. I had a passive and gentle mentor called Silent Star at the time, who certainly lived up to her name.*

*She was the perfect match for me, and taught me well and often did solo sparring with me because she knew how the other apprentices treated*

*me. But whenever it came to group sparring, oh boy, did the nightmare start.*

*I prefer peace over violence, but Storm liked to do things the rough and fast way, and of course Russet followed in his paws.*

*During sparring they'd knock the breath out my lungs and kick me in the ribs where they knew it hurt the most, no matter how many times their mentors said to stop.*

*Leaf was the only one who didn't try to hurt me, and he always asked if I was alright if I ended up winded or hurt after a session with him.*

*This led to Silent Star only letting Leaf spar with me because those two once got me into the healers' cove after I had trouble getting air back into my lungs.*

*Of course, the teasing carried on. They would do it jokingly, of course, because they knew I was sensitive about certain nicknames. But it didn't hurt any less when they called me old, unreliable and overall said I was like an Elder or a DenFolk pet."*

Goslingpaw felt a twinge of sympathy for the Hydro, as she recalled all the times the BlazeClan cats would call her names.

"*Then how did you get them to stop?*" She mewed, tilting her head up to look the grey tom in his calming blue eyes.

*"I tried proving that I was reliable and I was as strong as them; that size didn't matter because despite me being older I was still smaller and lankier than all three of them.*

*I tried practicing fighting with Silent Star more, I tried hunting more and practicing aerial manuevers to strengthen my wings.*

*Yet none of that ever worked and both the teasing and roughhousing resumed, at least not until that night I nearly became a cripple*."

Goslingpaw's eyes went wide. "*A cripple?*" The lanky tom nodded quietly. "*The patrols had reported a pack of four dogs roaming the valleys that were transported via a passenger boat, all of which were rabid and huge.*

*Those three overheard and decided to defy our king's orders to not go out on their own, and bless my claws, later proceeded to sneak out at night to hunt for those brutes.*

*They didn't succeed the first few nights, and fared quite badly in sparring matches because they all stayed up late to find the dogs.*

*But on the seventh night, I decided to follow them in secret. I had a gut feeling that something was so very wrong that night, and I wanted to ensure they were safe.*

*What do you know? I hear them shriek and the first thing I see is four of the biggest, meanest-looking and by far the ugliest hounds I'd ever seen in my life.*

*The hounds had them cornered to the Ashes Sycamore and rendered them unable to do anything; there are dogs like Xiera who are kind and don't bother with us, but the ones they encountered were the type who liked to kill innocent creatures for fun.*

*They understood us but couldn't speak our language, and were mocking Storm, Russet and Leaf for trying to scare them away.*

*I had to do something, you know. I can't just leave them there to suffer even though they enjoyed mocking me.*

*Just before the biggest hound scooped up Russet, who was trying to play hero, into its jaws, I let out the loudest and shrillest caterwaul I can manage and hurl towards the beasts, and when they turned to see what created the noise I swiped the biggest over the nose.*

*He yelped in pain and then all of a sudden those big brutes' attention was on me.*

*I was beyond bloody terrified back then, but I don't know if it was bravery spurred by foolishness or determination to prove that I'm not useless, because I start insulting the absolute lizard-drops out of the hounds.*

*'Course it got them mad; they all began advancing towards me and I whirled around and ran for my life. Those dogs don't take insults lightly, so of course they ran after me. My wings were basically frozen out of*

*fear, so I couldn't fly to save myself.*

*I ended up leading them towards the forested area and near the tribe, screeching and shrieking bloody murder and insults all the way until they caught up to me.*"

Goslingpaw felt her breath hitch. "*What happened then?*" She whispered, eyes wide.

"*One grabbed me and bit at my front left leg, another snapped at my hind legs and had them between its yellow, grotesque teeth, and the fourth was ready to snap my body in half as the two played tug of war with me while the third tried ripping at my wings. I'm surprised I held together for that long.*

*Then an entire patrol comes running to my rescue; had they come even a second later I would have definitely died right there and then.*

*Apparently Leaf told the night guards in a fit of panic when those three then fled back to camp, but the whole tribe was already riled up because they'd heard me screaming for help.*

*Those four hounds were absolutely no match for an entire guild of tribe cats. Torn apart immediately after I was freed.*

*I was sent to the healers for a full four moons because those mangy dung-breaths had bitten so hard their teeth hit my bones and had ripped at my muscles and one of my bloodstreams badly. The whole tribe thought I'd never walk again.*

*Leaf, Storm and Russet were punished and weren't allowed to leave camp for three whole moons and all their Naming Ceremonies would be delayed.*

*Storm and Russet both threw a fit, of course, but Leaf had accepted the punishment and immediately ran into the healers' cove to apologise to me for running off. Of course I accepted his apology; but I was more worried about myself."*

The tom ducked his head in a sheepish manner. "*I hope I don't sound selfish.*"

The cream and brown she-cat quickly lifted a paw and meowed, "*You don't, Splash Sprint! You don't.*" The tom gave her an awkward smile, they quietly continued with his story.

"*I was beyond astonished when Russet ran into the healers' cove the next day, hysterical and so close to bursting out crying. He apologised desperately to me and kept asking if I was alright.*

*I found it strange as he normally wouldn't apologise to any cat without getting dragged there by his mentor, let alone this desperately and sincerely.*

*Later I found out from Silent Star that he had recurring nightmares that night after I was saved about the dogs tearing me apart and my corpse saying it was his fault as he was a coward. He really felt guilty about leaving me to deal with the hounds myself and soon came to regret even teasing me.*

*I accepted his apology out of sympathy for him feeling so traumatised over my accident, but even after that he still insisted on visiting every day to see if I was okay.*

*Apparently he still had nightmares and was very desperate for them to stop, so he tried to make up for all the times he teased me by bringing me prey and grooming spots I couldn't reach."*

"*Wait, what about Storm Breeze? Didn't he also apologise?"* Goslingpaw asked.

Splash Sprint sighed, rolled his eyes and answered in his soft, lilting voice, "*Storm only apologised after Leaf forcefully dragged him to the cove, and I still felt like I should forgive him so that's what I did. After that he limited coming to pester me because the healers did not want to let him in at all unless it was to treat an injury.*

*Russet really changed after the accident, though. He hung out with Storm less and less and got more and more quiet and respectful to the point the whole tribe was confused and worried about his change.*

*He spent every fleeting moment with me in the cove and even delayed his in-camp sparring to stay with me when I got a cold.*

*When the healers said I could try walking, he was the first to rush to my side when I nearly toppled over standing up. Spent a lot of his time by my side helping me learn to walk again even though he didn't have to, and fretted like a mother pheasant would to her eggs if I fell or tripped."*

Goslingpaw stifled a giggle at the tom's words and cocked her head towards him curiously.

"*He was still a bit vain as before, but this time he toned it down a lot and also gave compliments to others. The tribe was awed by his whole change. Storm was confused and rather dumbstruck by it, but begrudgingly accepted it.*

*We really did finish our apprenticeship quite late, about half a moon after Leaf and Storm were promoted to Rainstorm rank.*

*We both chose leg gauntlets as our charm during our ceremony, my reason being because I wanted to hide the scars from that night while his was because he wanted to... uh, honour me in some way?*

*Anyway, a moon passes and he's starting to behave a little weird. Getting more close to me each time, finding some opportunity to brush his tail or flank against my own, sharing prey... of course I was reasonably puzzled by this.*

*Then out of the blue, Leaf Wing told me that he knew the real reason for Russet's behaviour."*

Splash Sprint's expression turned slightly dreamy and warm, and he chuckled softly before continuing, "*He said Russet had fallen hard for me shortly after I tried learning to walk again as apprentices because he'd seen who I truly was and how different I acted despite his initial assumptions and started to admire me.*

*He just never said anything as he was too afraid. I'll be honest, I started falling for him too a little before we became Rainstorm ranked members.*

*He might've been vain, but deep down he really has a heart of gold and was a really kind cat who was just got really easily influenced by others. He was insecure and wanted to make himself known as a kit, so that was reason for his attitude and behaviour.*

*I thought it'd be funny to play a little waiting game and pretended to be oblivious to lead him on and see when he'd confess. Even then, I made it blatantly obvious I loved him back as I usually did solo patrols and I'd only ever ask him to follow me.*

*Eventually, two moons before you and BlazeClan made your grand adventure here, he asked me out to the Flower Springs and there he confessed he'd loved me and was just so afraid I'd reject him.*

*I didn't let him finish and just put my head under his and said I loved him right back, and well, we courted that very night and we have pretty much been together since."*

Splash Sprint paused, then gazed at Goslingpaw.

"*Love is like leaves flowing in the water, little wren. You can easily scoop one out the water, but if the current gets too fast you may not catch it in time like a crush if you don't confess in time, and if the leaf is ragged and torn it sinks like a toxic relationship.*"

The Hydro paused just as a leaf coincidentally floated by, and curled his paw, sending a stream of clear water spiralling gently out of the water with the leaf to his paw.

"*But sometimes, if you're lucky*," He meowed, turning to her with a gentle smile. "*You'll find the one that's perfect and all yours*."

# Chapter 17: Attempted Murder

Goslingpaw wasn't sure why, but after that special talk with Splash Sprint her mind drifted off to Depthpaw's face.

The thought of the handsome russet tom with his pretty copper eyes drifted into her head, before she hurriedly batted the thought away.

The older tom gingerly brushed his nose against her head and meowed, "*I'll be off hunting now. You be safe, okay? Don't stay on the steps for too long, little wren.*"

"*Yes, Splash Sprint*," she meowed obediently. He smiled and patted her head with a paw. "*That's a good hatchling*," he purred softly.

Swiftly the blue-grey tom launched into the air and shot off into the skies, flying ahead into the distance until he became a small speck in the bright blue sky.

Once he was gone, Goslingpaw sighed and turned her gaze back to the ocean, enjoying the soft lapping of the ocean waves. Her thoughts once again drifted to Depthpaw.

*Could we really be mates?* She thought. *I mean, he's kind and sweet and really pretty..*

Unfortunately, Goslingpaw was so engrossed in her thoughts that she failed to hear the pawsteps behind her, so the sudden shove of paws against her back to her by massive surprise.

She let out a yelp as her claws scrabbled on the slippery, wet surface of the water monster, before ultimately losing her balance and toppling halfway into the water.

She gasped and spluttered before staring up in disbelief at the cat who shoved her.

Dovetail and Swanpaw.

The cream and white Shine's eyes were glittering with a hint of a peculiar red light; slow-burning embers of a slumbering envy.

"*The only way my baby will rise to the stars is if we got rid of you, the hideous disgrace,*" she snarled. "*Swanpaw deserved your powers, deserved your royalty privileges! And you stole that from her*."

"*What are you talking about?! What did I ever do to you to make you hate me this much?*" Snapped Goslingpaw in a mixture of horror and rage.

At this statement, Swanpaw hurriedly looked away, an unknown expression pooling deep into her eyes.

"*You should've never been born,*" snarled Dovetail, contempt brewing in her eyes. "*Our family would've been happy if you were prettier. But instead I gave birth to a freak of nature*."

"*Why was my pure daughter not chosen to have her powers but you were?! Why did the Spirits above choose such a disgraceful, lying rat to be the one with royal privileges?! If I got rid of you, the powers would be given to Swanpaw instead*."

There was a crazed look in this she-cat's eyes. One of lusting for power and the hatred that had kept her venomous spirit alive.

"*That's it. If you vanished, our lives would be happier. We'd be worshipped as the royals of the Northern Kingdom instead of you. You just have to disappear where no one can find you*."

And at that, Dovetail slashed at Goslingpaw's face before stomping on her paws, and with that she lost whatever grip she had on the water monster and fell into the water.

Goslingpaw yowled in fear as the salty water flooded around her and the waves crashed into her smaller form, rendering it harder to stay afloat.

Above she could hear screeches of horror and anger coming from many cats, one of whom was clearly Dovetail and the only other distinguishable voice being Azurestar's.

Suddenly, another cat plunged into the water and began swimming hard towards her, and through the dark depths of the seawater she could only identify familiar russet fur and a small yet muscular build.

She barely had time to comprehend the identity of her saviour before she felt sleek fur brush up against her belly and another form supporting her from below, pushing her slightly out of the water.

She gasped as she looked down only to see Depthpaw struggling massively to try and swim her back to the water monster, which by now had stopped upon hearing the chaos.

There was another splash and she was taken aback to see Xiera paddling across the water, swimming smoothly towards the two apprentices.

Her strong jaws grasped Depthpaw's scruff and hauled him onto his back as Goslingpaw carefully slid down from the russet tom's back slightly and clung to the black-and-white dog's shaggy pelt.

Xiera managed to haul the two apprentices onto up to the water monster without much difficulty and let them slide off her back as she shook herself dry.

The large RoadWalker stomped over, murmuring gibberish words of concern, but jolted back when Aldertrail lashed out sharply at his mostly hairless paw with a sharp yowl.

Small drops of blood dripped from the scar she left on his hand, and he responded by quickly stepping back to let Aldertrail hurry over and pull her daughter close.

"*Goslingpaw! My baby, oh great stars you're alright*," she gasped in relief. Normally Goslingpaw would've squirmed in the embrace but this time she was far too shocked to care.

Nearby Thornslash was hurriedly tending to Depthpaw to the best of his abilities while her foster father furiously roared every obscene profanity under the sun at Dovetail and the cowering Swanpaw.

"*I HAVE HAD IT WITH BOTH YOUR RUBBISH, YOU IMMATURE*

*EXCUSES FOR RATS!*" Bellowed the silver leader angrily. "*WHY CAN'T YOU BOTH JUST LEAVE MY **DAUGHTER** ALONE?!*"

This prompted many gasps from the shocked BlazeClan cats that Azurestar had referred to Goslingpaw as his daughter. "*Azurestar, you don't understand- I was trying to get rid of the impurity in BlazeClan!*" Spluttered Dovetail.

"*ENOUGH OF YOUR NONSENSE!*" Screeched the silver tabby tom furiously. His fur had bristled up to the point he looked thrice his normal size, and his claws were fully extended and scraping the ground.

"*IMPURITY?! WHAT KIND OF NONSENSE IS THAT?! IS IT IMPURE BECAUSE SHE IS A HEALER? OR SHE'S NOT PRETTY ENOUGH FOR YOUR STANDARDS?*" Shouted the angered tom further.

"*EITHER WAY, IF YOU BOTH DARE TO LAY A CLAW ON MY DAUGHTER, I WILL SKIN THE BOTH OF YOU ALIVE!*" He roared with so much ferocity he seemed to resemble a lion. No one in the vicinity dared to say a word or step forth.

"*You- you wouldn't!*" Gasped Dovetail. "*You'd protect that disgrace over the prophecy cat?*" Without answering, Azurestar's response was to slash his ridged claws over both she-cats' faces, earning screams of pain.

"*My face!*" Squealed Swanpaw, cradling onto her face in pain as fresh crimson blood trickled down her cheeks and stained her once pristine fur. Dovetail had been, much to Goslingpaw's surprise and relief, absolutely stunned into silence, standing still as blood dripped from the scar.

Huffing at the pathetic display, Azurestar whipped around and snarled, "*Beechwhisker, Gustfang, keep these two disgraces away from my mate and my daughter. I don't care what you do, make sure they STAY AWAY*."

His blue eyes glittered malevolently. "*Or there will be more unnecessary bloodshed than this clan will be able to handle*."

# Chapter 18: Brutal Love

The cream and brown Littlepaw lay sullenly on the fluffy thing Xiera called a towel as Russet Rush drafted gentle waves of heat over her and Depthpaw in an attempt to dry them.

When the commotion had died down the RoadWalker had pulled out the fluffy sheet and had stretched it out on the ground, and Xiera had explained to Aldertrail and Thornslash that it was to prevent the water from making the ground slippery.

Splash Sprint was still out hunting, the apprentices had broken into groups and were whispering about what happened, and the higher ranks were crouched at the nose of the water monster discussing something.

"*That was really reckless of you, kit,*" sighed Russet Rush in very clear disapproval, his disappointment directed at Depthpaw who looked too tired to retaliate that he wasn't a kit. His stormy eyes flashed with a tinge of dissatisfaction.

"*You clearly couldn't swim; what would possess you to leap into the dangerous water on your own instead of letting a cat who can actually swim get her?*" He reprimanded, his tone biting and full of unamused disapproval.

"*I..*" the Titanpaw shuffled nervously. "*I was really scared for Goslingpaw and I wanted to save her like how she saved me from drowning when we were younger*," he mumbled sheepishly.

Goslingpaw felt heat rush to her cheeks at that statement and quickly hid her face in her wings so Depthpaw and Russet Rush couldn't see her fluster. He remembered, after all that time; he still remembered.

"*Ah, young love. Such a beautiful thing. That was still the stupidest thing you could've done,*" Russet Rush scolded, wafting a particularly hard draft of warm air at the Titanpaw. "*Don't do it again. You put yourself*

*and your friend in danger.*"

Depthpaw hung his head and sighed. "*Yes Russet Rush,*" he sulked. Goslingpaw inched closer to him and nuzzled his cheek affectionately. "*Thank you, though. You are the bravest tom in the whole world.*"

Depthpaw blinked in a flustered manner before he hesitantly returned the affection. "*I.. it was nothing, Goslingpaw. Any cat would've done the same for a cat they lo- care for,*" he replied.

She just smiled and rested her head near his, and soon she felt his own nestle into her cheek fur, earning an amused 'awwwww' from Russet Rush.

Suddenly, Azurestar yowled for attention and he had launched himself atop a stack of crates in a corner of the water monster. "*Looks like you both are needed,*" the russet cryptid hummed. "*Go on, shoo.*"

Immediately, both cats scrambled to their paws and scampered over to where the clan was gathering, finding the younger granite brothers and Softpaw and settling down with them.

Azurestar glared around at the cats of BlazeClan, blue eyes flashing with anger and determination. "*Cats of BlazeClan!*" He roared, his usually calm voice now booming with disappointment and a subtle rage.

"*I am sick and bloody tired of the way our culture, if it can even be considered as it, is going on. I am FINISHED with our misogynistic ways and I am TIRED of seeing toms look down on she-cats like they are nothing.*"

His tail lashed angrily and his eyes glittered menacingly, and no cat dared to say a word. "*Therefore, I have decided that I am going to TERMINATE our code.*"

Yowls of protest coming from the Claws and Titanpaws immediately rose, but a shrieking screech from the silver furred leader silenced them all immediately.

"*You heard me,*" he snarled. "*I don't care if you call me soft or weak or if you think I shouldn't be the leader because of this. But I am DONE with the way we have been treating the she-cats for moons.*"

He leapt down from the crate and snarled, "*She-cats are the ones who give life to us. Without them we would not be here today; they create life, the very life that will carry on our legacies when we're all nothing but dust. They go through pain just to bring life into this world, an honourable feat.*"

His gaze the swung to the Nettles. "*The Nettles heal us from injury and sickness. Without them BlazeClan would've ceased to exist moons ago from plague and infection! Without the Nettles, we'd all be sickly and miserable and no better than disease-ridden rats,*" He added.

His narrowed blue eyes flared and he glared back at the Claws. "*And I believe that if given the chance, she-cats can and will prove they can be just as, if not stronger than a tom. You all simply refuse to see that because you are all used to being superior to the point it has clouded your sense of equality*."

No cat dared to complain. "*If any cat wants to complain, you may do so now and I'll personally tear your tongue out your mouth if what I hear is just a preach of BlazeClan's misogynistic nonsense,*" he hissed.

The fear scent of the toms in the clan radiated in waves because of the ferocious BlazeClan leader. No one dared to challenge him; if he could take down Beetlescar, a tom far stockier and more muscular than him, he could easily take them down too.

He paced around for a moment, before he snarled, "*When we arrive to the Northern Kingdoms, I expect NONE of you to talk down to the she-cats or be disrespectful. Follow their rules, don't talk back and keep your trap shut unless necessary. Is that clear?*"

No cat answered, and he narrowed his eyes further. "*Have you all lost your ability to speak or magically became mute? IS THAT CLEAR?*" He repeated, his voice louder than before.

"*Yes, Azurestar!*" Yowled the clan in terror. He flicked his ear, satisfied. "*Very well. You all better remember what I have said today*

*and jolly well carry out your duties properly without any funny business*."

Terrified whispering and nodding hurriedly rippled through the clan, and all was well until Splash Sprint flew in with a massive fish in his jaws.

"*What happened? It's tenser than Storm Dust's muscles on a bad day.*"

# Chapter 19: Briefing The Oath

Goslingpaw watched as the two valley cats leapt atop a crate before calling out to the clan to come over.

Depthpaw cantered over to her and settled beside her, before murmuring, "*What do you think this is going to be about?" "I don't know,*" she muttered back.

*"Azurestar, I believe it's about time we brief you on the rules of the valley cats,"* Russet Rush meowed. "*It should prevent your clan from doing stupid things that may get them killed*."

A few of the BlazeClan cats bristled, but Azurestar paid them no mind and meowed, "*Go ahead. It is very necessary at this time."*

Russet Rush flicked a tufted ear. "*In the valley, we have a saying*," he began. "*Respecting you is my decision, proving that you're worthy of it is your choice.*"

"*Our code states that every cat, regardless of gender, rank and pelt colour, must be treated the way you yourself want to be treated, or better known as, with respect.*"

He glared at Swanpaw upon stating this, and the little white apprentice shrunk back in fear at his narrow blue gaze.

Most of the BlazeClan cats swallowed nervously as well when Azurestar then turned and fixed them with a threatening glare that could scorch trees till they were nothing but ashes.

Splash Sprint batted at his head lightly, scolding, "*Don't frighten the apprentice, she'll learn the hard way if she keeps it up on her own*." He regained his composure before adding, "*The breaking of this code is taken extremely severely, so please follow this rule*."

"*The second thing you should take note of is that you are allowed to have friendships and even relationships with those from another tribe.*

*Just don't get too close*."

"*What if two cats from two different tribes have kits?*" Questioned Lilynose. "*Won't it be troublesome when that happens?*" "*The kits are separated evenly, one half going to one parent's tribe. It really depends on the stronger elements that the kits have*," explained Splash Sprint.

*"Say for example there is a litter of four kits that are half Guild and half Cult blood. All four kits will bear the elements of both their parents but only one element will be stronger than the other."*

*"So, the kits that have more Cult characteristics and whose cult element is stronger than their guild element gets to stay with the parent in the Golden Rose Cult and vice versa*." The Shine nodded in understanding and sat back down, satisfied with the answer.

"*Our code also states that healers must learn to fight*," Russet Rush meowed, his gaze sharply turning to Goslingpaw and the other Nettles.

"*There was an incident that happened long ago where the healers of a tribe, we're not sure which, were all slaughtered ruthlessly in an invasion along with their patients as they could not ward off the attackers*."

Splash Sprint nodded. "*As a result of that, it has become a mandatory practice for all healers to train in battle*." Goslingpaw felt excitement well up in her gut. She would finally get to learn how to fight!

Many may have thought she would've chosen to drop the oath of a healer once she was within the tribe's ranks, instead taking on a better role like a noble, valiant warrior or a fast and successful hunter.

However, the young Littlepaw had grown used to being a healer, and had even come to love being one. She could not bear to think about leaving her medical knowledge behind.

Suddenly, the Granite brothers' mother, Starlingspirit, hesitantly raised a paw. "*Is.. is there any sort of position for being a permanent queen in the tribe?*"

Splash Sprint blinked down at her, his eyes softening. "*Yes, there is.*

*But the queens do have to pull their weight around camp as much as possible*." Starlingspirit blinked and nodded. Stonepaw and Slatepaw gave their mother supportive glances along with their father, who smiled lovingly at his mate.

Only Rockpaw glanced away in embarrassment as the other Titanpaws sniggered quietly, with only Depthpaw shaking his head in disapproval at their attitude. Thankfully Russet Rush had heard it, and he fired the group of Titanpaws an angry snarl which shut them up rather fast.

"*There is nothing wrong with choosing to be a permanent queen,*" he snarled. "*It is honourable that there are cats willing to teach and nurture our future generations our ways of life. You being ashamed of this honourable she-cat, your own mother, volunteering to raise our future generation is nothing short of immature and selfish*."

The Titanpaws sheepishly looked down, shuffling their paws nervously at the russet cryptid's reprimand. Whether it was the fact they weren't used to their morals being disagreed with or the fear of the powerful fire-bender before them, Goslingpaw didn't know.

"*And this brings me to the next rule which is watch what you say,*" Splash Sprint sighed. "*The tribes are very strict on the code and any sort of disrespect is not tolerated in any way no matter how potent the dose*."

He flicked an ear. "*There were cats who had their tongues burned out for saying borderline disrespectful things to a fellow tribemate or a tribemate in another tribe, so unless you want that to happen to you then I suggest you stop and think before you make your next moves*."

The pretty blue-grey tom flared his wings before he meowed, "*The rest of the code is very self-explanatory. Give thanks to the Stars for prey, don't trespass on other tribes' grounds and challenge every intruder*."

Russet Rush licked a paw before drawing it over his ear. "*As for the apprentices, you will be assessed once regarded fit enough to train alongside the tribe apprentices, physically and mentally*."

"*What does being mentally ready have to do with anything?*" Beechwhisker muttered, puzzled. "*To the tribes attitude is what matters more than physique*," Splash Sprint answered. "*We will not assess apprentices who do not have the desired attitude and behaviour of a proper tribe cat to-be*."

"*And that means you must be respectful to others and know what to say to others*," he added with a menacing growl directed at all the apprentices save for Goslingpaw.

Goslingpaw giggled quietly as Slatepaw backed up slightly and Stonepaw's fur bushed up in actual terror. Softpaw pressed herself deeper into Chanterellestreak and Depthpaw gulped.

Russet Rush may have been ready to flaunt his terrifying appearance, but Splash Sprint's regality mixed with his trademark snarl which rarely came out made for an even more terrifying cryptid.

"*Remember, respect is the one value that must be held at highest regard in the Northern Kingdoms*." The Hydro stared down at BlazeClan with a chilling glare.

"*Cats with no respect at all have no space in the Northern Kingdoms*."

# Chapter 20: This Is Home

Night had fallen faster that Goslingpaw had expected, and after their final meal of fish on the water monster she had been told to rest herself first as they would be nearing the valleys soon.

Though most of the clan were resting, Goslingpaw herself felt stressed.

How was she supposed to act in the Northern Kingdoms?

Were her cousins going to be really scary?

What if she couldn't fulfil her duties properly?

Were **healers** even allowed to be given the chance to lead the tribe?

Her head was like a jungle; she couldn't figure out what her next steps would be at all. It was a lucky thing her foster family would be there to help her.

As the sky shine bright with millions of gleaming stars, Azurestar and Aldertrail rested on each side of her, tails coiled together.

"*Why so nervous, my hatchling?*" Aldertrail murmured gently as she nosed her daughter's ear. Goslingpaw sighed and leaned in to her mother's touch.

"*I'm scared. What if my cousins are really scary and don't like me?*" She breathed out unsteadily. "*I'm sure they won't be frightening,*" she crooned softly. "*You are a brave little hatchling, after all.*"

Azurestar gently grazed his tongue over her forehead. "*You've braved the mountains, the RoadWalker destruction of our old home and the claws of Dovetail and Cougarstar. You are our brave little warrior*."

*But will that be enough?* Goslingpaw chose to keep that question to herself. Azurestar suddenly twitched his tail and murmured, *"Goslingpaw, how would you feel about.. new.. siblings?"*

That got her attention real fast. "*New siblings?*" She asked in surprise.

Aldertrail purred in amusement. "*Yes. Azurestar and I have been thinking of having kits so we decided to ask you first*."

"*I'd love new siblings! Can I name one of them?*" She asked excitedly, eyes shimmering with excitement and joy at the thought of being a potential older sister.

"*You're taking this better than expected*," chuckled Azurestar. "*Of course you can, they'll be your siblings after all*." He and his mate lovingly nosed the foster daughter gently.

"*No matter how many kits we have, you'll always be our first daughter*," he murmured warmly to her.

Goslingpaw blinked gratefully up at Azurestar and touched her nose to his muzzle before doing the same to Aldertrail. She was lucky to have these two loving foster parents.

She yawned quietly, before laying her head on her paws. "*Sleep well, dear hatchling*," mumbled Azurestar gently as he laid his head down, Aldertrail doing the same.

The stars shone down on the little family as water monster cruised on.

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Xiera's barking aroused the whole clan from their slumber as the water monster began to slow.

"*We here,*" the black and white dog rumbled. "*Now is time for you to go*."

The two Northern cryptids leapt from their perch and swiftly touched their noses to the huge canine's own. "*Thank you for accompanying us on this journey*," Splash Sprint mewed.

"*No issue. Must make sure winged cat friend get home safe with new friends*," the canine murmured, wagging her tail gently.

She glanced over at BlazeClan, before dipping her sharp face down

respectfully. "*I wish you all safe lives*," she rumbled. "*May Stars above guide your path*."

Azurestar dipped his head back to the canine, and Goslingpaw followed suit out of respect. She had gotten a little attached to the older black and white dog and her companionship.

The surroundings were misted over by fog. Swirling clouds of grey and white billowed around, and Goslingpaw felt as if she was being choked by the fog.

It was like a mysterious force of nature; the billowing fog started to fade and clear, revealing the massive island before them. The sun was beginning to peek out of the ocean horizon, the sky turning pale shades of orange and red.

The water monster soon came to a halt at the coast, and Goslingpaw got a better glance at the island and all its beauty. It was simply massive.

On the sandy beach they were on as the RoadWalker guided them off the water monster, tall trees were scattered all over the shore, with tall rock formations here and there.

Goslingpaw watched with amusement as Stonepaw dabbed a paw at a strange creature with two big pincers and eight spindly legs, only for Gustfang to pull him back before the pincers snapped at his nose.

Xiera nosed the two cryptids once more before leaping aboard the water monster again as it began turning and heading away from the shore.

"*Why was it so misty?*" Vervainwhisker asked tentatively. "*The mist only clears for those destined to join the ranks of the Northern Kingdoms*," explained Splash Sprint.

"*The sand is getting in my paws and fur!*" Complained Swanpaw. "*Can we move faster?*"

"*Do you ever stop complaining?*" sniffed Russet Rush with clear, unhidden disdain in his voice. "*I've never seen even kits complain as*

*much as you*."

Swanpaw opened her jaws, offended and clearly about to start complaining again, but Splash Sprint fired her a nasty glare which again, did wonders to promptly shut her up.

Wordlessly, he gestured for BlazeClan to follow, and he and Russet Rush both broke into a run. Behind, the Prickles, along with Cottonsong, grasped a kit each and ran along.

Goslingpaw ran alongside her parents at first, but soon she gradually powered ahead and Stonepaw, Slatepaw, Softpaw and Depthpaw caught up to her shortly after.

This was it. Their new home.

After so many moons they were finally where they belonged and she would be able to continue her father Rippling Leaf's legacy with pride.

She followed as the blue and red pelts ventured through the trees that grew along the beach, watching as their tails gradually twined together as their steps seemed to match.

*Maybe that will be me and Depthpaw someday*, she thought. One day, but certainly not now.

Soon, the trees seemed to come to an end and BlazeClan soon raced out into what seemed like a world full of fantasy that was only visible in dreams.

The sun spilled golden rays across the valley, igniting the dew-kissed foliage in a thousand shimmering hues. The flora seemed to pulse with life, each petal a brushstroke of colour, painting the landscape with vivid greens, deep ambers, and luminous blues.

Towering trees with iridescent leaves formed a natural cathedral, their branches dancing gently in the soft breeze. In this enchanted space, the air was thick with the sweet scent of wildflowers and the songs of nature—a symphony that resonated with the heart.

Rushing waterfalls tumbled down mossy cliffs, their crystal-clear

waters cascading into tranquil pools below. The sound of the water was a gentle roar, a soothing melody that harmonized with the calls of vibrant birds flitting through the branches.

Hummingbirds, their wings a blur of iridescence, darted from bloom to bloom, while butterflies, like living jewels, glided gracefully in the air, their wings a tapestry of colours that seemed to reflect the essence of the valley itself.

Hills swathed in greenery were visible on both sides of the valley, and Goslingpaw could even see ancient RoadWalker structures that scattered the lands like stars in the sky.

Nature was reclaiming its dominion over a once-grand castle that stood at its heart, a relic of a time long past. The castle, known as Eldrith Keep, was a formidable structure of weathered stone and crumbling turrets, draped in a cascade of vibrant vines and blossoming flowers that climbed its ancient walls as if to whisper forgotten secrets.

Goslingpaw felt her breath hitch as she glanced around the valleys at the beauty before her, at all the life that teemed in every corner.

She was finally home.

# Epilogue

Foxglove Heart carefully stepped out on a limb of the great tree and scanned the sky.

The night had grown thin, the darkness thread like a worn garment through which the first dim streaks of the morning would soon begin to glimmer.

He had sensed that the two toms would be arriving tonight after he had received the vision and was dream-visited by Tarragon.

And something told him they would bring some guests along with them.

Although he had not been born a valley cat, instead being raised as a pampered human pet, he had grown to possess those extraordinary instincts the ferocious Northern warriors had.

And now as he treaded farther out onto the branch, he did sense something flying toward the kingdoms.

He blinked and lifted his head up. Something from far away was coming! Something was stirring the air. The vibrations seemed to ripple across his tawny brown fur.

Then he heard the lookout cry from Lake Shadow, the only calico tom in the whole Northern Kingdoms of the Stormfast Isles.

"*Strangers two points north of east! Great Goddess Aquila! It's Splash Sprint and Russet Rush flying point! They're back! They're back!*"

A gasp escaped the fox-tailed tom's maw. "*They're coming back. They're really back!*" He whispered. The ancient tribes of the valley began to shake with the sound of cheering warriors.

From every direction, cryptids all flew out—Pyros and Chronos, Psammos and Bios, Atmos and Prisms—to perch on the branches and stone outcrops and cheer the return of the two brave Northern

warriors, the new arrivals and the daughter of one of the greatest warriors of the valley—Rippling Leaf.

And as the sun rose from the crashing tides of the ocean, great wings sliced through the air, and a sweet scent curled around his muzzle.

"*Rippling Leaf,*" he breathed out softly. "*Your daughter is home.*"

"*I know*," the voice whistled back. "*I know*."

# Trivia

• The beachside town is called Sunnyville, and the residents there love animals and treat them as humanely as possible.

• The people in Sunnyville actually knew about the winged cats long ago. Some people wanted to capture them to study them, but many protested against it and refused to let them touch one hair on the cats' pelts.

• The Stormfast Isles is a place only the old fisherman knows about. He is the one human that knows of the hide of the Valley Cats, and has never told any other person.

• The tribal cats are quite friendly with humans but are still quite defensive when they come within close proximity.

• Xeira is a Border Collie.

• The dockside cats are called the jetty cats because they usually hang out on the rocky beaches that rim the town in summer.

• Sunnyville has no other mode of transport aside from steam, diesel and electric engines.

• Dovetail's way of raising her children stemmed from the way she was brought up as a kit. She was pampered and appraised to the point of egocentric and self-obsessed behaviour. She has always had high self esteem on the outside flawlessly hiding any fears or insecurities.

• Dovetail is fully aware of her actions and even finds enjoyment in putting others down with her hurtful words. She especially targets and takes out her jealousy on her older daughter whom she knows has a close bond with the clan deputy.

• Conversation on chapter 2 translates to:
**Northern Kingdoms sent you here on mission?**

*Yes, we were sent by our esteemed monarches of the tribe.*
**Ahh. I thought you come for honeymoon like human.**
**Why so many wingless cat here?**
One of them is a royal heir.
**Royal heir! A royal heir! Ahh, it make more sense now.**

• Xiera's Shadish is just as good as her cat-speak. In other words, not that good, but still decipherable.

• Splash Sprint is capable of holding his breath up to a little over an hour. Hydros are not able to breathe underwater but they have expanded lungs to hold their breath while hunting.

• Russet Rush is a very rare mix between a Pyro and a Hemo. He does not know how to use his Hemo powers properly so he only uses his flame powers.

• Tarragon's element is Oneiro. She is capable of an ability called dreamstalking.

• Splash Sprint is a FTM transgender kitty. Aside from the pressure given by Sly Whisker and Cunning Storm on giving them kits, he was also envious of his brother's stronger build despite Zephyr Whistle being smaller and younger.

• Lichenfrost was renamed to Daybreak and she lives a content life as a stray hunting mice in the meadows and parks.

• The song that Russet Rush sang in 'The Four Beasts' is actually a poem from the roblox game mimic which I absolutely love. I thought of each of the four beasts manifesting in the four valley tribes and thus giving the cats in that tribe the negative traits of those beasts.

- **Control manifests in the Golden Rose Cult. They are influenced by their leader, who is charming and charismatic enough to fool anyone into slipping under her control completely. They will fight tooth and nail to gain control of a battle and will fight unfairly to win. They also tend to be manipulative towards anyone outside the valley they don't like.**

*- Rage manifests in the Tribe of The Blooming Valley. The tribal cats are extremely violent with outsiders and even their own allies when they have to be. You don't have to do much to trigger their tempers; say one bad thing about their tribe and they'll unleash their absolute fury on you with no hesitation.*

- Jealousy manifests in the Hearts Of The Restless. They are easily envious of the other tribes' territories and will sometimes purposely extend their borders just so they can have better prey. They also harbour feelings of jealousy toward the Tribe at times as the Tribe cats have a reputation as the most powerful in battle; but they know better than to challenge even one cat from that side.

- Rebirth manifests in the Guild Of Freedom. This tribe is way too obsessed with creating new life forms and as a result their powers have become increasingly more dangerous as time passes by. They have fused a Scoto's powers with a Crystallo's to create a monster being before which resulted in the deaths of many, and the Xylos have created new monsters out of dead wood in their territory.

# Character Showcase

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Enjoy yet another character showcase!

Splash Sprint is a cat many would call a father and a hero. He's loving and sweet, and is the foster father of eight apprentices scattered across the four valley tribes. He's a hard worker and refuses to let injuries get him down, often overworking himself to the point of sickness, but thankfully he's surrounded by cats who care for him and tell him to take a break. He's a magnificent aerial dancer and is regarded as one of the most beautiful cats in the valley.

Russet Rush is Splash Sprint's mate and one of the best fliers in the whole valley. He likes talking about his achievements and talents, and often needs to be knocked down a peg to tone it down. Growing up with a terrible family, he's fearful of losing the cats he loves, especially Splash Sprint. An early accident involving fire also caused his fear of hurting his loved ones, so he tried to keep his temper in check around them.

This is Xiera, she's a Border Collie and a stray dog who roams the streets of Sunnyville every day. Xiera is on good terms with the visiting Valley Cats for she never showed any signs of ever wanting to hurt them, and has even helped them to navigate the beachside town on a lot of occasions. Xiera has many dens hidden in many different areas of Sunnyville, and she's never always in one place.

About time we showed the four kits! Ripplekit has had a strange connection to herbs and their usages when he was first visited by the healers. Contrary to his father's expectations, he cared not a whit about battle and instead often went to the Nettles to ask them to teach him about herbs. He has a skilled mind and his future name will be Ripple Tuft.

Icekit likes having the wind in his ears and the satisfaction after

catching a piece of prey. However, he is also very timid and doesn't like to socialise a lot with other cats due to his disability, only being comfortable around his siblings and especially his sister, much to his father's confusion and dismay. He has a potential future as a Hunter and his future name will be Ice Talon.

Hailkit is very outgoing in contrast to his brothers. He has a knack for being quick to respond to a cat in need, and has by far the sharpest sense of sight and hearing out of all his siblings in the litter. He also loves play-fighting with his sister, and often gets into mischief with her. He has a potential future in Search-And-Rescue and his future name will be Hail Whistle.

If every litter has a difficult kit that kit would be Mousekit in this case. Despite being generally obedient, she's reckless and likes to jump to conclusions. She's very tactical and calculating when it comes to games that usually Titanpaws play, giving her a possible future in Defence And Battle much to her father's distaste. Her future name will be Mouse Curl.

Bruce, a jetty cat. He's courteous, strong-willed, and open minded, but frowns upon kittypets and does not find the good in their ways of life. He has cut off all ties with his only kin, his sister, for choosing a life of cowardice as a kittypet, and his heart aches deeply for her but his pride refuses to let him try to rekindle their spark.

Pecan is Bruce's sister and unlike him she has no wish to rekindle their once unbreakable bond. She is wise, focused, and insecure. She's happy living her life of pampered luxury with her humans, and would never return to her former life as a jetty cat again even if it meant her brother's life.

Flora, the quarry cat. She is good friends with Bella as both share the sorrow of their sons leaving them for good cause. Giving up her only child, Kunzite, to ensure he at least has some chance of survival, Flora is content with staying in the noisy quarry on her own, venturing into the dark depths of the caves where she knows she can find peace and solace.

Finally, Bella. She is a popular kittypet and is well known for her

son being the first kittypet to ever travel to the Northern Kingdoms and become a warrior successfully. She misses him dearly, but is content with knowing that her darling child is happy living the life he wants.